

# Skills-Based Reading

READING LEVEL 5-6

REM 953

A TEACHING RESOURCE FROM...



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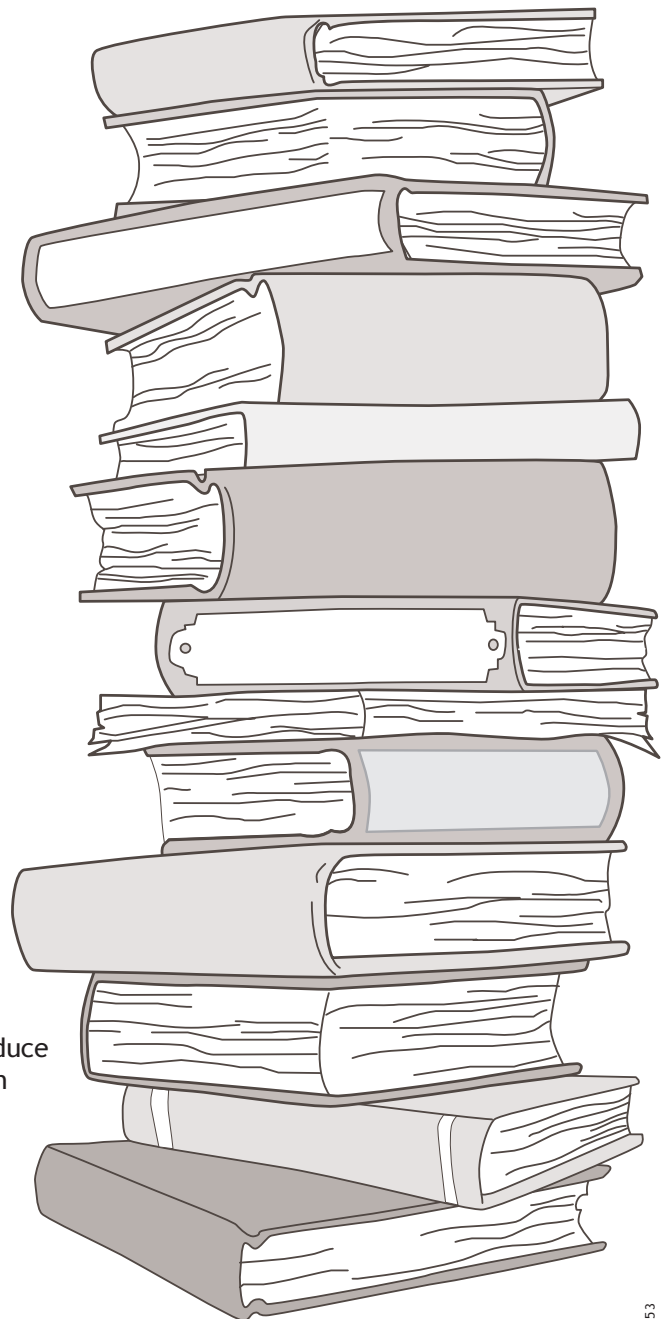
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# INTRODUCTION

The stories and activities in this book are designed to capture student interest while building valuable word, comprehension, thinking, writing, and research skills. The Fry Graph Scale was used to help determine readability. Selections range from approximately early 5<sup>th</sup> to late 6<sup>th</sup>.\*

Each story features vocabulary words to be introduced prior to reading. Particularly in science-related selections, the questions following the story may ask students to find certain definitions. You may wish to glance at the questions before assigning the story to determine if this is the case. You could then choose to introduce the new words yourself, or have the students look them up before reading the story.

The questions following each selection are labeled according to the primary skills they target. Consequently, you may decide to cover stories in sequence or according to their targeted skills.

The sections entitled “For Further Study/Writing Practice” provide research and writing activities for students desiring an extra challenge. At your discretion, students may write one paragraph, several paragraphs, or an entire report covering the suggested topic.

\*Readability scales are useful as long as one realizes their limitations. Results are approximate guidelines only, with a minimum margin of error of (+ or –) 1.5 grade levels. In other words, a story measured at a fifth grade readability level could easily be suitable for both fourth and sixth graders. Another limitation is that two different readability scales can be applied to the same sample, yet yield widely varied results. In spite of the inexact nature of readability scales, we at Remedia use them because they measure word and sentence length, both valid predictors of readability. At the same time, we realize that these scales are not designed to measure every other factor affecting readability, such as sentence structure or appeal to the reader. We are also aware of the variance in standards and expectations set for each grade level. What is sixth grade material in one school may be seventh, or even eighth in another. At Remedia we strive to take all these factors into consideration as we develop and revise materials. We leave the rest in your capable hands. Regarding readability, you – and your students – will be the final judge.

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## Raging River

### WORD LIST

bru • tal  
fe • ver • ish • ly  
re • lent • less

re • in • force  
Pu • lit • zer Prize  
e • vac • u • ate

“The Flood of the Century” began with a cold, brutal winter in the upper Midwest. Record snowfalls together with a spring ice storm sealed the fate of the towns along the Red River. The river simply could not hold all this water. A flood was sure to come. Grand Forks, North Dakota and East Grand Forks, Minnesota would be the hardest hit. As the 1997 spring flood season approached, people nervously watched the river — and waited.

The Red River is unusual. It flows north instead of south. It often looks sleepy in the summer. But it can become a raging monster in the spring.

That spring the hardy Midwesterners built and reinforced dikes. Many helped sandbag. People worked feverishly around the clock. Still the relentless river rose. It would crest (reach its highest point) at 54.4 feet. The normal flood stage is 28 feet.

Finally, on April 18 the brave citizens lost their fight. The dikes gave way. As water poured into both cities, most people had to evacuate. The next day, 60,000 people were out of their homes. A fire in downtown Grand Forks destroyed 11 buildings. One of these buildings housed the Grand Forks Herald newspaper. Though it lost its offices, it did not miss a day of publishing. The paper continued to keep flood-weary people informed. It later received a Pulitzer Prize for its efforts.



The 1997 flood caused terrible problems. Ninety percent of Grand Forks and all of East Grand Forks had to be evacuated. For weeks, even months, people lived with relatives or in special trailers. Some stayed at the air base ten miles away. Many lost all they owned. Three out of four homes in Grand Forks suffered flood damage. Almost all the homes in East Grand Forks did. Damages totaled \$2 billion. Streets were lined with ruined items, resulting in 60,000 tons of trash having to be hauled away. Fortunately, thousands of volunteers rushed to help with the cleanup. Most fortunate of all, no lives were lost.

Since then, both cities have rebuilt. People are working hard to develop a better dike system in this flood-prone area. The lessons of 1997 will not soon be forgotten.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Raging River

### GETTING THE FACTS

1. What did the people along the river do to prepare for the flood? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did 60,000 people need to evacuate? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did the Grand Forks Herald receive a Pulitzer Prize? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Name two bad results of the flood. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### DICTIONARY SKILLS/VOCABULARY

5. Look up *rage* or *raging* in the dictionary. What would a *raging river* be like?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### WORD ANALYSIS/VOCABULARY

6. What does it mean to *seal the fate* of something? Circle the letter of the closest meaning.  
A. to glue together  
B. to be the cause of something bad that is sure to happen  
C. to seal shut

### SEQUENCE

7. Number these events in the order they happened.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Volunteers helped the flood victims.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Record amounts of snow fell, and an ice storm struck.  
\_\_\_\_\_ The dikes broke.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Both towns were flooded.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Raging River

### COMPARISON/CONTRAST

8. How is the Red River different from most rivers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How can the Red River in the summer be different than the Red River in the spring? \_\_\_\_\_

### CAUSE AND EFFECT

10. What caused the flood of 1997? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

11. What have you learned about the amount of damage and suffering that a flood can cause? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### APPLYING INFORMATION

12. How can people help others who have experienced something difficult, such as a flood? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### For Further Study/Writing Practice:

Look up *flood control* in an encyclopedia. What are some methods of flood control? Write a paragraph about what you find.

# Fire!

**WORD LIST**

oc • cur

trag • e • dy

fier • y

tech • nique

dis • as • ter

es • ti • mate



The United States has a long history of forest fires. Before the days of modern fire prevention and firefighting, they took many lives. The nation's worst forest fire occurred in Peshtigo, Wisconsin in 1871. Over 1,200 people lost their lives. Four million acres burned. Another fiery disaster, a rare firestorm, struck Hinckley, Minnesota in 1894. Six hundred lives were lost, over 400 in Hinckley alone. More would have died if not for the bravery of a few railroad employees. As the hungry flames approached, they rescued as many people as they could. Six towns and more than 160,000 acres were destroyed in that fire. In 1918, tragedy struck again. This time, 1,000 people were killed. That included 400 in the town of Cloquet, Minnesota.

Today most fires occur in the western states, not in the Midwest. Fortunately, not nearly as many lives are lost. This is due in part to better warning systems. Forest patrols and aircraft watch for signs of fire. If one does start, they watch its progress

closely. People who are too close to the fire can be sent to a safer place.

Firefighting techniques have also saved lives. Firefighters use several methods to stop fires. They may dig ditches around the fire. Or they may use a backfire. (To do this, they burn an area ahead of the fire.) When the fire gets to the ditch or the burned area, it stops. Since there is no more dead wood or thick brush to burn, it goes out. Sometimes airplanes drop special chemicals on the fire also.

How do forest fires start? One estimate is that two-thirds are started by accident. Almost one out of four is set on purpose. About one in ten is caused by lightning. Another important factor is dry weather. Dead wood and thick brush also play a part in starting forest fires.

Forest workers often allow fires started by lightning to burn. Or they may set a controlled fire on purpose. These fires help clean up the forest. They can help some trees and plants grow better afterward. They can also prevent a worse fire in the future. But all such fires must be watched closely. Sometimes they can burn out of control.

We still have more to learn about preventing and controlling forest fires. But we have made great progress since the deadly fires of a century ago.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Fire!

## GETTING THE FACTS

1. What area of the country had terrible fires a century (100 years) ago?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Where do most forest fires occur today? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why are fewer lives lost today? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name two ways that firefighters can stop fires. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## DICTIONARY SKILLS / VOCABULARY

5. Look up *control* or *controlled* in the dictionary. What do you think a *controlled* fire is? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## VOCABULARY

6. Write synonyms for these words. Use words from the word list or the story.

flames: \_\_\_\_\_

burning: \_\_\_\_\_

happen: \_\_\_\_\_

tragedy: \_\_\_\_\_

method; way: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTEXT CLUES

7. What does *factor* mean? (Use the words around it to help you figure it out.) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Fire!

### ANALOGIES

8. Use words from the story to finish these analogies.

Wind is to windy AS fire is to \_\_\_\_\_.

Policeman is to police car AS \_\_\_\_\_ is to fire truck.

### CAUSE AND EFFECT

9. Name two causes of forest fires. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### MAKING INFERENCES

10. Forest workers sometimes set a controlled fire. How could this help prevent a worse fire in the future? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

11. Think of the example of the railroad employees. How do some people respond when there is a tragedy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ANALYZING INFORMATION

12. What happened over and over again before modern fire control methods were used? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### For Further Study/Writing Practice:

Look up *forest fire prevention* in an encyclopedia or science book. Write a paragraph about how to prevent forest fires.