

# **Passage Oral Reading - Grade 4**

---

## **Student Forms Booklet**

Page left intentionally blank.

---

## THE CLASS MEETING

The class secretary began writing the students' ideas on the chalkboard. Mr. Jacobs sat at his desk listening. He usually tried not to interfere with these class meetings.

Jerry Simmons stood up next. "A beach picnic sounds okay, Susan," he began, "but what if it rains that day? I think we need an alternative plan."

"How about an all-night party here at school?" Craig Meyers blurted out. "That's what they did in my brother's class for high school graduation. They had a band, and dancing in the gym, and showed movies all night in another room." Craig looked around the room with a big grin on his face, thinking his idea was certainly the best.

"I don't know," said Jonathon Wright, "some of our parents might not support the idea of an all-night party. But we could do that same type of thing from eight in the evening until midnight." There was a period of silence while the students considered the options that had been raised.

President Alicia took this chance to summarize. "So far," she explained, "we have had three ideas. One, a picnic at the beach; two, an all-night party at school; and three, an evening party. Are there any other ideas before we put these to a vote?"

---

## THE DOUGHNUT SHOP

It smelled wonderful in the shop. There were frosted doughnuts, doughnuts with toppings, and plain cake doughnuts. Dario could tell he was going to like this job!

The shop owner, Mrs. Haney, trained Dario on the store's equipment. It seemed easy enough. There was one machine for mixing the dough, one for pressing the doughnut shapes, and one for baking them.

Several days went by with everything running smoothly. Then, on the last day of his first week, disaster struck. Mrs. Haney's car wouldn't start, so she was late to work. Dario had already mixed the dough, so he had to finish the job on his own. He also had to manage the shop until Mrs. Haney arrived.

Dario poured the dough into the pressing machine. He turned on the switch and doughnut shapes came out. About six dozen came out just right, but then they started coming out in big blobs! Dario tried to turn off the machine, but they kept coming. "Oh no!" he cried. "Now what?"

When Mrs. Haney finally got there, six dozen perfect doughnuts were in the case ready to sell. Next to them were two rows of puffy cake doughnuts without holes. Dario told her, "Mrs. Haney, the bad news is that the pressing machine is broken. The good news is that we have a new style of doughnut, and nothing went to waste!"

---

## ROBINS

Some robins may come back to the same nesting area each year. Each spring, we watch them build their nest. We watch them collect dead grass and twigs. Soon we see the nest built on a tree branch outside our window. It's a great view, even though the nest is mostly hidden behind leaves.

The female robin spends time sitting in the nest. She is keeping the eggs warm and safe. Once a cat came near the nest. The male robin flew near the cat. The cat chased him instead of finding the nest. Luckily, none of the baby birds were harmed.

It isn't long before we see little beaks poking up over the top of the nest. Then Ma and Pa Robin are busy finding worms to feed the baby birds. Their babies are very hungry. As the chicks get bigger, we can hear them chirping. The chirping gets louder as they get bigger.

The most exciting time is when the little birds first leave the nest. The day before, we see them jumping around. When they begin to jump onto the side of the nest, I start watching as often as I can. Finally, they take the leap out of their nest to the ground, but it's only the beginning. Soon the baby birds will fly off on their own.

---

## A LONG DAY

Anthony got tired of walking and Dad had to give him a piggyback ride. Finally, we got to the bay where the Boston Tea Party had been. There were lots of ships in the bay. We were all getting hungry, so Dad took us into a small shop. They had all kinds of fish lying on ice. We each ate some shrimp.

“I want to go swimming,” Anthony said.

“Me, too,” said Sarah. “This has been fun, but let’s go back to the hotel.”

“Okay,” Dad agreed, “I think we’ve had enough walking for one day.”

This time, we rode the bus. When we got off, we still had to walk two blocks to the hotel. While Anthony and Sarah went swimming, I fell asleep. What a long day it had been! When I woke up, I was hungry, and so was everyone else. We decided that hamburgers, a shake, and French fries sounded good to all of us. We were able to find a place just two blocks from our hotel that had what we wanted. While we ate, we talked about what we had seen that day. Tomorrow, Dad said we were going to see a baseball game at Fenway Park.

---

## ALEX

Alex brought out a photograph album full of family pictures.

“Wow,” said his friend Tony, “You really have a lot of pictures.”

“These are pictures of my great-grandparents when they were young,” explained Alex. “This is a picture of my great-grandfather. When he was eight years old, he came to America from Scotland. He worked for a clockmaker and learned how to make all kinds of clocks. When he got older, he started his own business making clocks. That clock over on the desk was made by him.”

“How old is that clock?” asked Tony.

“It’s over a hundred years old. It’s made of brass and oak, but best of all, it still gives the correct time.”

“What about your grandmother?” Tony asked. “Was she from Scotland?”

“No,” replied Alex, “She was born in America, but both her parents were from Germany. They were farmers and came here to start a new farm. First, they moved to the state of New York, but land was too expensive there. Then they moved to Indiana and found land they could afford. They built a farmhouse on 120 acres of land. Their first crop was corn, and they had several cows and hogs.”

Tony was impressed that Alex knew so much about his family history. He decided to learn about his own family history.

---

## DRIVER'S LICENSE

Lakeesha was confident about getting her driver's license. Her sixteenth birthday was only a month away. She had taken a driver's education course at school and did very well in it. Lakeesha knew all about the different types of road signs. She knew what speed was appropriate for different roads. She knew what to do if it was raining or snowing.

Lakeesha had also been practicing and had received her driver's permit when she turned fifteen. That let her practice driving with an adult. She liked going out with her dad. He was a good teacher. Her dad showed her how to start the car and to stop it. He talked to her about how to slow down at the intersections. Her father explained to her how to speed up to pass a car. He showed her how to signal at the right time.

The hardest thing to learn was parallel parking. At first, she wasn't very good at it. But her dad told her everyone had trouble learning how to parallel park. Soon she got the idea. Now she is good at parallel parking.

At first, Lakeesha thought she would buy her own car. But when she learned how much a car would cost, she changed her mind. Her dad said she could use the family car now and then. He also said if she was going to drive, the family's car insurance would increase a lot. Lakeesha said she would help pay for part of the insurance. She had a part-time job at the local grocery store and had extra money. Her dad said that would be a good idea. She couldn't wait to get her license.

---

## A NEW FRIEND

My family was living in China for the year. We met many Chinese students there. We made lots of friends. One of my favorite friends was Teddy. That was his English name. I met him on a boat trip. We were both passengers coming back from an island. I was sitting in a seat on the deck. I saw Teddy look at me. He wasn't sure if he wanted to talk to me. Then he walked over. He asked if he could sit down. He was wearing a student uniform like all the students do in China.

“Are you American?” he asked in English.

I told him that I was an American. He asked me where I went to school. I told him about the American school in China. Then he asked me if I took Chinese in school. I was uncomfortable answering that question because I was doing so poorly in my Chinese class. I finally admitted that I was taking Chinese but that it was very challenging. He laughed and said so was English. Together we laughed about our common problem. We continued our conversation speaking a little Chinese and a little English. Our teachers would have loved it.

---

## MY ROOM

My room is my own. In my room, I can be boss. That may not seem very important to you, but it is to me. I am a kid and kids are not boss in very many places, so if I can be boss in my room, it is important to me.

When you walk into my room, you can tell it's a kid's room right away. On the walls, I have some very large posters of some of my favorite people. Since I like to sing, some of the posters are pictures of singers. I like those pictures very much, but my dad doesn't. He thinks that most of the popular singers aren't really very good singers. You know how parents can be sometimes. They seem to think that only the singers who were popular when they were kids sing very well. I'm glad I'm boss in my room because I wouldn't want pictures of my parents' favorite singers on my walls.

Now I just wish I could keep my mom and dad out of my room. When they come in, they always find something for me to clean up!

---

## SHOOTING STARS

Emma loved to look at the sky at night and watch the stars. One night, when she was outside with her brother, she saw a shooting star. The star swept across the dark sky and left a long trail of light. Emma thought it was a wonderful sight. “I wish I could see a shooting star every night,” she thought to herself.

When Emma found out that her class was going to learn about space, she became excited. She hoped they would talk about shooting stars. Mrs. Carson was the science teacher, and she told the class that they would learn about the moon, the planets, and the stars. Emma raised her hand and asked if they would learn about shooting stars. Mrs. Carson said that they would learn about a very special shooting star that would soon appear. Everyone thought that was great!

The first week, the children heard about the planets that make up the solar system. The next week, they learned about how stars are just like our sun. Finally, it was time to talk about shooting stars. Emma told the class about the shooting star she had seen. Mrs. Carson then told the class about one of the greatest shooting stars and said it was called Halley’s Comet.

---

## THE HIKE

Carlos and Jordan were going hiking in the mountains. Both wanted to hike in the Snowy Mountains. Carlos planned the route for the hike. He spent time reading a hiking guide about trails in this area. The hiking guide described a fifty-mile trail that sounded interesting, but was it too long? After reading about it, neither boy thought so. It would be a good trip. They were ready to go.

The trail followed the southern ridge. The steep route was called the Ridge Trail. They saw many good views, so Jordan was glad he had his camera. There was plenty of wildlife. Deer and bear were common, as were eagles. The camping spots were good. There were also many ponds. This made for a nice swim on hot days. Carlos wondered if there were any fish in the small lakes.

The trail, however, was steep in sections. At one point, it rose 1000 feet, crossing the mountain with many switchbacks. Fortunately, they had been working on getting in shape. They had hiked a lot. The high altitude did not bother them because of their training. At night it was cold, but they had good equipment. Their gear protected them. Their sleeping bags were rated for twenty degrees below zero. The cold temperatures did not stop them. They had a great time.

---

## THE HOTEL

We drove into the bustling city of Boston. Our family had won an overnight stay there through Dad's work. He asked us not to talk so he could read the street signs as he drove. There were many tall buildings and lots of people walking on the sidewalks. Yellow taxicabs could be seen everywhere. Buses were taking people back and forth.

"Here's our hotel," said Dad happily. He stopped the car in front of an old building and a man took our suitcases inside. Another man drove our car away to park it in the garage. Inside the hotel lobby were lots of people who looked busy.

"Do you have a swimming pool?" Anthony asked the lady at the desk.

"Yes, we do," she answered. "It's on the fourth floor."

"Oh, boy, let's go swimming right now!" said Anthony.

"No, I want to walk around the city!" said Sasha.

"There will be time for both," Dad said. "Let's go to our rooms and unpack our bags."

Our rooms were on the tenth floor of the hotel. There was one big room with two beds and a smaller room with one bed. Sasha got to have the small room. Dad had one bed and Anthony and I had to share the other one. When we looked out the window, we could see the city skyline with all the tall buildings.

"I can't wait to walk around Boston," I said. "This looks like a fun city to visit."

---

## THE TRIP

The day came that we were to leave on our trip. Dad put the four suitcases in the trunk. Then, the trouble began when all three of us kids tried to get into the front seat.

“I should sit in front,” said Lola, “because I’m the oldest!”

“But I’m the littlest and I can’t see out the window when I’m in back!” cried Hector.

“I have an idea that will solve this problem,” said Dad. “Since there are three of you and the trip will take three hours, you can take turns and each spend an hour in the front seat.”

We agreed with the idea and Lola flipped a coin to see who got the front seat first. Hector won the coin toss and chose to sit in the front seat first.

As we drove along, we passed many farms and small towns. It was a sunny day and people were outside working and playing. When it was my turn to sit in the front seat, we stopped to have a picnic lunch. Dad had made some good ham and cheese sandwiches. Like always, Hector complained about his sandwich and wouldn’t eat the crust. Dad threw it into the bushes of the picnic area and a group of birds came by and flew away with it. Soon, we were back on the road driving toward Boston. From the front seat, I could see much better. As we got closer to the city, we saw more houses and buildings, and traffic increased.

---

## THE VACATION

Jenny was excited to go on vacation because this year would be different. Usually her family camped, but not this time. They were going to the city, and this would be new. There were many things to see, and Jenny even made a list.

First was the amusement park. It had many new rides, and she wanted to ride the Rocket. The House of Fun was also on the list because many of her friends said it was a great experience. The roller coaster was also a must.

The zoo was next on the list because it had many new animals. Jenny wanted to see the kangaroos and the Siberian tiger. She was also excited about the whales and the beautiful parrots. The animals were from all over the world. Jenny planned on taking lots of pictures. She was excited about using her new camera.

Last was the new skyscraper. She would go all the way to the top to see the amazing view. She hoped for a nice day. So much to do! Jenny could hardly wait.

---

## TOLL BOOTH

Mom threw the crust of the sandwich on the ground, and a group of birds came by and flew away with it. Soon, we were back on the road driving toward Boston. From the front seat, I could see much better. As we approached the city, we could see more houses and less farms. Traffic was so heavy with the cars and trucks that Mom had to slow down. Up ahead on the road, I could see flashing lights.

“What’s that flashing light and little house?” Curtis asked.

“That’s a toll booth,” said Mom. “We have to pay seventy-five cents to use this part of the road.” As we drove up to the toll booth, a red light flashed, and we came to a halt. Mom gave the man in the booth a dollar and got a quarter back. Soon the red light changed to green and we drove away.

We were driving the busy streets of Boston now. Mom asked us not to talk so she could concentrate on reading the street signs. There were lots of tall buildings and people walking the sidewalks. Yellow taxicabs were everywhere, and buses were taking people back and forth.

Curtis and I liked looking out the windows at all the activity. It was hard to keep quiet when there was so much to talk about.

---

## TREE HOUSE

Billy and David were playing baseball in their yard. Billy was looking for the ball when he heard his dad hammering. Where was he, he thought to himself. Billy stopped looking for the ball and started looking for his dad.

Dad looked like he was fixing the apple tree. Billy had never seen his dad in the apple tree before. Billy climbed this tree a lot and would often climb way up near the top. Sometimes he would even climb way out on a branch. People never saw him sitting in the tree. He was hidden by the leaves and the branches. He could see them walk by on the sidewalk, but they would never see him. It was a great place to sit.

Billy's dad asked him to bring him some wood. Billy brought some plywood pieces and two-by-fours from the garage to his father. Then he sat down to watch his dad sawing and hammering nails. His dad was building a box in the tree. The box looked like a small house. Billy knew then that they would soon have a tree house!

Billy helped his dad during the project. He picked up nails that his dad dropped, and he ran to the house to get tools. By the end of the day, Billy had a tree house.

---

## CROWS

Crows are very smart birds. They can solve problems and plan several steps ahead. They have even been seen using simple tools.

They live in many kinds of places, even in cities. They eat almost anything, even garbage. There can be a lot of garbage where people live. That means there are a lot of reasons for crows to live in cities near people.

Crows build nests in the spring and live in small families through spring and summer. Young crows often stay with their families for a year or two and help raise their younger brothers and sisters. You may see these families of crows together.

In the fall and winter, crows often form bigger groups. They do this for protection and to stay warm. These groups can be very large and, in some cases, can have thousands of crows. This sometimes bothers people in the cities. Crows can be noisy! But remember they are just trying to stay safe together.

Crows are not usually big enough to harm people or pets. However, you can make sure to keep garbage cans closed to keep crows out. You should never harm crows. They are protected by certain laws. If a group of crows is causing problems in an area, there are experts that can often get the birds to move somewhere else.

## OUR FRIEND, THE DOG

They say that dogs are people's best friends, and that may be true. Dogs have been part of people's lives for thousands of years.

Early dogs were more like wolves; in fact, they were wolves. It is thought that people slowly learned to train these wolves to help in their daily lives. Some wolf dogs pulled sleds in Arctic countries so that people could travel. They could also help carry supplies from place to place.

Over the centuries, dogs have helped people herd sheep and cattle. There are dogs that have been specially trained for herding animals. Dogs have also served as guards to protect families and towns.

Today's dogs have become pets but are still very important to us. Some have even saved people's lives. Dogs have a powerful sense of smell. They can smell many things that people cannot. Some dogs have been known to smell when their owner is sick. They bark or whine to signal that something is wrong. The owner knows to go to the doctor, thanks to their watchful dog.

Dogs are amazing animals that have done so much for us human beings. Best of all, they are our companions through thick and thin.

---

## KATHERINE JOHNSON, NASA SCIENTIST

As a young girl, Katherine Johnson was already good at math. Her parents supported her love of math. She had to go to a different town to go to high school. Her own area did not yet offer classes for African Americans after grade eight. By the time she got to college, she was far ahead. A professor added new classes just for her. This was so she could keep learning more.

After Johnson finished school, she started a family and looked for a job in the math field. She taught school for a while. In 1953, she was hired by a government group. This group later became NASA. She worked for them for over thirty years. She became a scientist. At NASA, the math work was important. Johnson did not worry about people telling her she couldn't do something. "You had a mission and you worked on it," she said. In 1960, she helped write a research report. She was the first woman in her department to be listed as a report's author.

Johnson did math for the 1961 space flight of Alan Shepard. Shepard was the first American in space. Later, NASA started using computers to do math. In 1962, computers did the math to send astronaut John Glenn into orbit around Earth. But Glenn said he wasn't ready to go unless Johnson checked the computer's math first. She loved her work and didn't stop until 1986. In 2015, Johnson received the Medal of Freedom from the president. This is one of the United States' highest honors.

---

## THE FERRIS WHEEL

These days, amusement parks are full of fast and exciting rides. They do all sorts of daring loops and steep drops. One of the earliest rides was the Ferris Wheel. It was completed in 1893 for the World's Fair in Chicago.

The people who planned the fair wanted something big and amazing to show the world. For a long time, no one could think of anything. Finally, an engineer named George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr., had the winning idea. He designed a giant turning wheel that people could ride on. The wheel would carry them almost as high as the tip of the torch on the Statue of Liberty in New York City. There were other riding wheels at the time, but none were as big.

The Ferris Wheel opened on June 21, 1893. It was a huge success. For the next several weeks, over a million people paid fifty cents to ride on it. Each ride lasted twenty minutes. People sat in cage-like baskets that hung down from the wheel. They enjoyed views from higher up than they had ever been before.

After the fair, the Ferris Wheel was removed. It was later blown up and sold for scrap metal. Since that time, smaller forms of the Ferris Wheel were built. You can see them at fairs and amusement parks all over the world.

---

## VOLCANOES

A thin crust keeps life on Earth safe from the fiery forces deep inside. A volcano is an opening in the earth's crust that allows heated rock and gases to escape. The earth's crust is made up of several parts called plates. These plates are always slowly moving.

Sometimes these plates are pushed together. Then a part of the crust can be pushed deep inside the earth. There, the crust melts and then rises back up to the surface. The crust has become hot, flowing rock. Red-hot rock and gases burst from the opening made by the moving plates in the earth's crust.

After the fiery release, the hot rock and ash form what is called lava. The lava cools and hardens. Volcanoes can make different types of lava. One is runny and flows downward. Another kind of lava is thick and sticky. Some lava forms in the shape of pillows. Pillow Lava comes from a volcano that exploded under water.

Volcanoes can be different shapes and sizes. Some look like a cone with steep slopes; others are curved with gentle slopes. Volcanoes don't just form on land. They can also form under ice caps or on the ocean's floor. Even other planets and moons have volcanoes!

---

## COLOR IN PAINTINGS

When you look at a painting, what do you see first? You might notice whether it is a design or a picture of something real. Then you might notice the shapes the artist used or the lines that form those shapes. Another very important part of art is color.

A painter will mix colors to make their painting feel a certain way. Red, blue, and yellow paint can be mixed to make the other colors. For example, a red paint mixed with a blue paint will make a purple color. A painter can do a lot with color. Color can show a mood or feeling in a painting.

Some colors are thought of as warm. These are the reds, yellows, and oranges. They can make a painting exciting, happy, or angry. Some colors are thought of as cool. These are the blues and blue greens. They can make a painting feel calm, peaceful, or sometimes sad. Purple and green can be cooler or warmer depending on how they are mixed. If there is a lot of blue mixed in the purple, it will seem cooler. If there is a lot of red in the purple, it will seem warmer.

Colors also seem to change next to each other. Some paints look better together than others. If you put red next to green or blue next to orange, the colors can stand out more than they would alone. Sometimes, these color combos are called opposites. This is because they are across from each other on a color wheel. A color wheel is an artist's tool that shows all the main colors in a circle and tells how they work together.

---

## EATING DIRT

It would be a very strange thing to eat dirt. Right? Why would anyone do that? Dirt most likely doesn't taste very good, and there are so many other good things for us to eat.

It turns out that many animals do eat dirt. For some elephants, monkeys, and birds, dirt is a regular part of what they eat. Why? Dirt contains minerals such as iron and salt. People and most animals need these minerals to survive and be healthy. Many animals can't get enough iron or salt in the foods that they eat, such as plants. So, they will eat a little of the rich soil near water holes.

Some animals may eat dirt for another reason as well. Scientists have noticed that some rain forest animals such as monkeys eat lots of leaves from the surrounding trees. Those leaves are one of the few types of food they have. But some leaves are not that healthy. They have a little natural poison in them, and the animals will get sick if they eat too many. There are some clay soils that help get rid of poisons. The animals have learned that eating the soil will help them stay healthy.

While it does seem strange, dirt does more than feed plants. It helps animals to stay healthy, and it can also help them from getting ill. Nature works in many ways to help all creatures live and do well.