Oral Reading Fluency

When I say “Begin,” start reading aloud at the top of the page (point). Read across the page (point). Try to read each word. If you come to a word you don’t know, I’ll tell it to you. Be sure to do your best reading. Ready, begin.

Blight on the Hill

It was high noon on a brusque October day, sunshine flooding the Earth with warmth and light. A gray horse and two large mules, a man and two young girls rode quietly, single-file, through the water worn crevasse etched into the Cumberland Mountains. Riding the gray horse, I led the arduous way. Following after, riding mule-back, came my small sister, and after her, riding mule-back as well, rode the Blight—dressed as she would be for a gallop in Central Park, or as though riding a mount in a horse show.

I was taking them, as promised, to a place where only the feet of experienced mountaineer women and men had ever trod. We were headed beyond the crest of the Big Black, to the waters of the Cumberland—the lair of moonshiner and feudsman. Here was housed a culture that only still existed in this secluded mountainous region. This had been a pet dream of the Blight’s for a long time, and now, finally, the dream was coming to fruition. The Blight was in the hills.

Nobody ever went to her mother’s house without asking to see her, even when she was a little thing with raven black hair, smiling face, and jet black eyes. Both men and women, with children of their own, have said that she was, perhaps, the most captivating child that ever lived. There are those that claim that she has never changed—and I am among them. That’s how it was in her world and how it was when she came to mine. On the way down from the North, the conductor’s voice changed from a command to a request upon asking for her ticket. The jacketed lord of the dining-car saw her from a distance and proceeded to show her to a most desirable seat allowing her to face forward, next to a spotted casement in order to be free from the glare of the sun on the other side.

Words Attempted _____
Errors _____
Words Read Correctly _____

(if score is less than 10, discontinue and record words read correctly on top of this page)

Prorating Scores
(for students who complete an entire passage in less than one minute)

The passage score is obtained by using the following formula:

\[ 60 \times \text{ (total words correct) } \text{ divided by } \text{ (seconds) } = \text{ Words Read Correctly} \]
Oral Reading Fluency, continued

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Space Shuttle Launch

Most of us, who live in Florida, live near enough to go and watch a Space Shuttle Launch at least once in our lives. Last year, we decided to take the Shuttle Launch Experience (which is a simulated shuttle take-off); it was awesome because it coincided with the launch of the space shuttle Discovery.

The journey began as we entered a gantry-styled walkway into a building inspired by Space Shuttle processing facilities at Kennedy Space Center. We listened to astronauts’ testimonials of their experiences on launch, landing and space flight (which were fascinating). This set the stage for what was to come. Next was a technical explanation of the steps of a Space Shuttle launch. Dramatic sound and lighting effects, rumbling floors, and fog dramatized the moments before launch. We boarded the mock Space Shuttle and strapped in for launch (inside the unique motion simulator) which brought the launch to life by replicating the sights, sounds, G-forces, and rattle of lift-off. The sensations of launch continued as we experienced Max Q. Max Q is the zone where enormous forces squeeze the Shuttle, the Solid Rocket Booster separates, the main engine cuts off and the External Tank separates. It was an incredible experience.

After our mock launch we got to watch the real thing. The weather was perfect; it was a scheduled early evening launch. The sky was reddening on the horizon when the countdown began. After the Shuttle Launch Experience, I will never view a launch in the same way again. We felt as though we had first-hand knowledge of what the astronauts were going through having heard their testimonies and having experienced a mock launch. Take off was outstanding! The brilliant light emitted by the two solid rocket boosters was painfully bright and visible for 2 minutes. Discovery was a go! The shuttle lifted up straight into the air; after a few minutes it seemed to flicker and then abruptly winked-out just 8 minutes and 23 seconds after launch. During those few minutes the main engines shut down and the huge, external tank was jettisoned over the Atlantic. At that moment, Discovery had risen to an altitude of 341,600 feet (64.7 miles), while moving at nearly 17,000 mph.

Words Attempted _____
Errors _____
Words Read Correctly _____