Jacob’s Ladder
Reading Comprehension Program

Center for Gifted Education
The college of William and Mary
Goal of Program

- Methodology to move students from simple to complex, critical reading skills
Study in 2008, Stambaugh
  - Students made significant gains in reading comprehension and critical thinking compared to control group.
Goals and Objectives

- Four ladders with three levels of comprehension on each ladder.
  - Lower rungs are basic comprehension
  - Highest rungs promote critical thinking skills
Ladder A – Consequences

- Rung 1 – Sequencing
- Rung 2 – Cause and Effect
- Rung 3 – Consequences and Implications
  - Thinking about short and long term events that may happen based on events identified earlier
Consequences and Implications

What would have happened if the audience had clapped? How would it have changed the outcome of the story?

Cause and Effect

What effect did his friends’ laughter have on the horse? Think of a time someone has laughed at you. How was your reaction similar or different from that of the horse in the story?

Sequencing

List the three most important events from the story in order.
Ladder B – Generalizations

- Rung 1 – Details or examples
- Rung 2 – Classification
  - Categorize examples and details based on characteristics
- Rung 3 – Generalizations
  - Using details and categories
Can you create a poem that is like this one? Choose one natural element and one animal from the following table to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Elements</th>
<th>Animal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>Bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>Fish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The author chooses a cat to describe the fog. What characteristics of cats might have made the author choose it? Make a list of these cat characteristics.

Draw a picture that might go along with the poem. Write a sentence to explain your picture.
Ladder C – Themes

- Rung 1 – Literary Elements
- Rung 2 – Inference
- Rung 3 – Theme/Concept
  - State the central idea or theme for a reading
What major ideas does the story tell us? Write a story with human characters that is similar to this animal story.

What evidence is there in the story that the gnat was proud? Why did he feel this way?

The main characters are a lion and a gnat. Complete a comparison chart to show how different they are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ladder D – Creative Synthesis

- **Rung 1 – Paraphrasing**
  - Restate a short passage in your own words

- **Rung 2 – Summarizing**
  - Summarize larger sections of text by selecting key points

- **Rung 3 – Creative Synthesis**
  - Create something new from what you learned
D3

Creative Synthesis

Write a math word problem that requires the use of probability to solve.

D2

Summarizing

In three sentences or less, describe the differences between equally likely and not equally likely probability.

D1

Paraphrasing

Rewrite the following statement in your own words:

“Probability is the measure of how likely an event is to occur based on the number of ways the event could occur and the total number of possible outcomes.”
How to Start

- Pre-assessment
  - Page 102 for Level 1

- Rubrics
  - Page 106 for Level 1
Third-Grade Pretest:  
The Fox and the Leopard

Please read the story “The Fox and The Leopard” below. Then, answer the four questions related to the story.

The Fox and the Leopard  
(Originally told by Aesop)

The Fox and the Leopard disputed which was the more beautiful of the two. The Leopard exhibited one by one the various spots that decorated his skin. But the Fox, interrupting him, said, “And how much more beautiful than you am I, who am decorated, not in body but in mind.”

1. What do you think would have happened if the fox looked like the leopard? Provide evidence from the story to defend your answer.

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What does the fox mean when he says, “And how much more beautiful than you am I, who am decorated, not in body, but in mind”? Provide evidence from the story to defend your answer.

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

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## Assessment Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Implications and Consequences (Ladder A)</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides no response or response is inappropriate to the task demand</td>
<td>Response is accurate and makes sense but does not adequately address all components of the question or provide rationale from text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Inference (Ladder C)</strong></td>
<td>Provides no response or response is inappropriate to the task demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Theme/Generalization (Ladders B and C)</strong></td>
<td>Provides no response or response is inappropriate to the task demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Creative Synthesis (Ladder D)</strong></td>
<td>Provides no response or response is inappropriate to the task demand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Texts and Ladder Skills

- Beginning of each text chapter, pieces listed with ladder skills covered
  - Short stories
  - Poetry
  - Non-fiction

- Pages
  - 19, 53, 75 for level 1
Chapter 1 includes the selected readings and accompanying question sets for each myth or fable selection. Each reading is followed by one or two sets of questions; each set is aligned to one of the four ladder skills.

For Jacob's Ladder 1 the skills covered by each selection are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Ladder Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Ant and the Dove</td>
<td>A, B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crow and the Pitcher</td>
<td>A, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daedalus and Icarus</td>
<td>A, C</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Dog and His Reflection</td>
<td>A, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fisherman and His Wife</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Judge</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lion and the Gnat</td>
<td>A, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mice in Council</td>
<td>A, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The North Wind and the Sun</td>
<td>A, B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tap Dancer</td>
<td>A, C</td>
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Process

- Model with whole class
  - Completing a task ladder
  - Outline expectations
  - Record Keeping
  - Process
Windy Nights
By Robert Louis Stevenson

Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.
Consequences and Implications

Who is “he” in the poem? What clues do you have that might imply who “he” is?

Cause and Effect

Wind causes many things to happen. What happens in the poem as a result of wind? Can you think of other effects that the wind causes?

Sequencing

Which words does the author use multiple times? Do you think those are important to the order of the poem? Why or why not?
Steps in Teaching a Lesson

- Brainstorm/Answer Sheet
  - Ladder for each story
  - Students jot down ideas or questions about selection as they read
  - Use this to guide discussion
- Students read selection
- Discussion via whole class or small group
Classroom Diagnostic Form

- Record progress of students on ladder skills
- Pages
  - 120–124 for level 1
- Marks
  - 2 – exceed expectations
  - 1 – satisfactory
  - 0 – needs improvement
# Classroom Diagnostic Form

*Short Stories*

Use this document to record student completion of ladder sets with the assessment of work.

- 0 = Needs Improvement
- 1 = Satisfactory
- 2 = Exceeds Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>The Ant and the Dove</th>
<th>The Crow and the Pitcher</th>
<th>Daedalus and Icarus</th>
<th>The Dog and His Reflection</th>
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Reading Comprehension Program
- Level 1: grades 2–3
- Level 2: grades 4–5
- Level 3: grades 6–8