

# STUDENT TEXTS

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## The City Dump

The city dump and my bedroom have a lot in common. They are both places where people dump things in heaps and mounds, not caring how they do it. They both have signs to tell people that they should be cautious when entering. (My mom bought mine for me and put it up.) They both smell on occasion depending on what food item spoiled or what socks didn't get washed. Best of all, people only visit when they have to. I like that because no one invades my privacy.



One Monday, my alarm clock didn't go off so my mom had to wade through the heaps and piles of miscellaneous garbage to shake me awake. As she turned to go back upstairs, she caught her foot in a pile of old magazines and fell flat on her face.

Well, you can just about imagine the snowball that started rolling. I was grounded for the next two days so I would clean my room. That didn't work. Her next plan - ground me from the television. Once again, I prevailed.

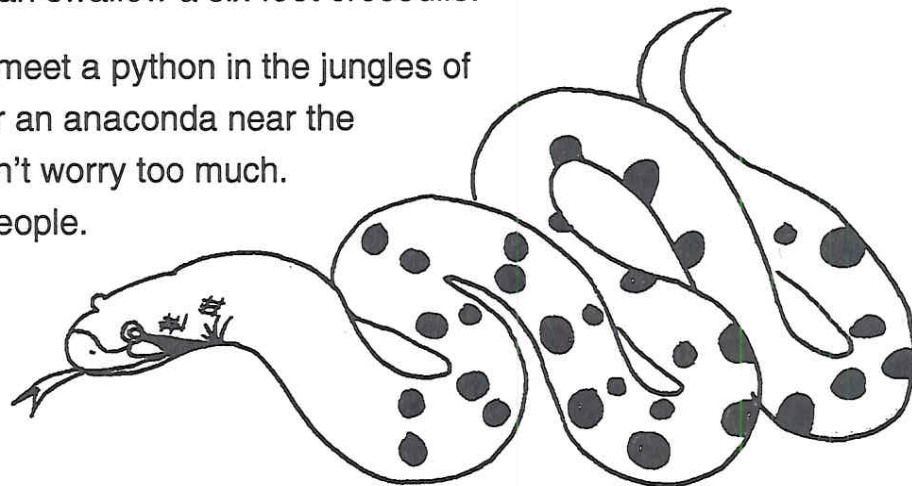
On Friday, with the weekend peeking around the corner, she used the ultimate threat, no telephone. How could she do that to me? I wouldn't survive a whole weekend without talking to my friends.

So I gave up the battle. I cleaned all day Saturday and Sunday. My mom brought the funny smelling cleaner in and sprayed it everywhere. The City Dump had turned into the City Park - yuck!

Well, I lost the battle but I knew I'd win the war. I came home Monday to that sickly, clean smelling room, took off my clothes, gave them a toss, taking extra care to wave my smelly socks around the room. It should only take one more day to be back in my own Home Sweet Home.

## Giants of the Snake World

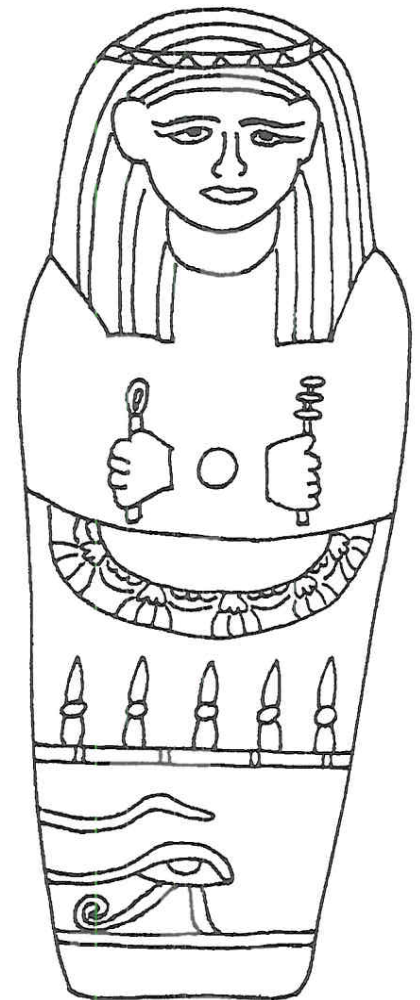
- ① How big is a giant snake? The python and anaconda can both grow to be over 30 feet long. Some are as big around as a telephone pole.
- ② Unlike poisonous snakes, pythons and anacondas have no venom to kill their prey. Instead, they kill their prey by twisting their bodies around them like a coil and squeezing and squeezing. The victim soon stops breathing and the snake eats it.
- ③ Pythons and anacondas cannot tear their victims apart, so they swallow them whole. All snakes have jaws that open very wide. When a giant python kills a wild pig, it grabs the pig's head with its numerous teeth and slowly pulls itself over its prey. Little by little, the pig goes in. The python may not eat again for a year.
- ④ Anacondas are very proficient swimmers. This helps them to capture their prey. They live in rivers and often eat crocodiles. An anaconda wraps itself around a crocodile, pins it against a tree, then squeezes it to death. A giant anaconda can swallow a six-foot crocodile!
- ⑤ If you ever meet a python in the jungles of Southeast Asia or an anaconda near the Amazon river, don't worry too much. They rarely eat people.





## Ancient Egyptian Mummies

- ① If you think mummifying a person in ancient Egypt was a simple task, you're dead wrong. The whole process from death to burial took about 70 days. In this way, the Egyptians preserved the body so the spirit of the dead person could live a new life after death. They believed the spirit would leave the body to live in the spiritual world and then return to its body each day.
- ② To enable the spirit to recognize the body to which it belonged, the Egyptians worked hard to preserve the remains of the dead.
- ③ To prepare the body, embalmers first removed various internal organs. They preserved those organs in special jars. At the time of burial, the jars would accompany the mummy to the tomb. The Egyptians believed the heart was the center of intelligence, so it stayed inside the body.
- ④ Next, the embalmers used natron, a kind of salt to dry the body out. They packed natron inside the body and covered the body with it. This dehydration process took about 40 days.
- ⑤ The embalmers then covered the body with sweet-smelling oils and a tar-like waterproof substance.
- ⑥ In the final stage, the body was wrapped in strips of linen and placed in a case and then in a coffin. The case and coffin had been shaped and painted in a human image. Seventy days later, the mummy was ready for the tomb.



## The Key

① The three glowing suns rose slowly as Ray looked back at the wrecked spaceship and his sleeping crew. He knew it was going to be another blistering, hot day with the air sucking the life from their bodies. This planet was a furnace. When would the rescue shuttle arrive? The crew had set up a continuous signal. The main fleet must know their spaceship had crashed on this planet. They had been here for six weeks. Their mission was to find and learn from beings in other worlds. He didn't know how much longer they could survive.

② Ray made his way around the huge, red sandstone boulders, heading for the place he had dreamed about last night. The vision was clear even now. He knew the shimmering gate wasn't a fantasy but a real place and he was going to find the key to unlock his dream.

③ After several hours of walking and stumbling, Ray tripped on a rock and fell, lying as still as a fallen tree. He roused himself and looked up at the gate, shimmering and moving in the terrible heat. He grasped a nearby rock and pulled himself up. He approached the gate, so exhausted he could hardly go on. He closed his eyes and stumbled through.

④ "You have passed the test," said a voice in his head. He opened his eyes and before him he could see his men cheering as a space shuttle landed to rescue them.

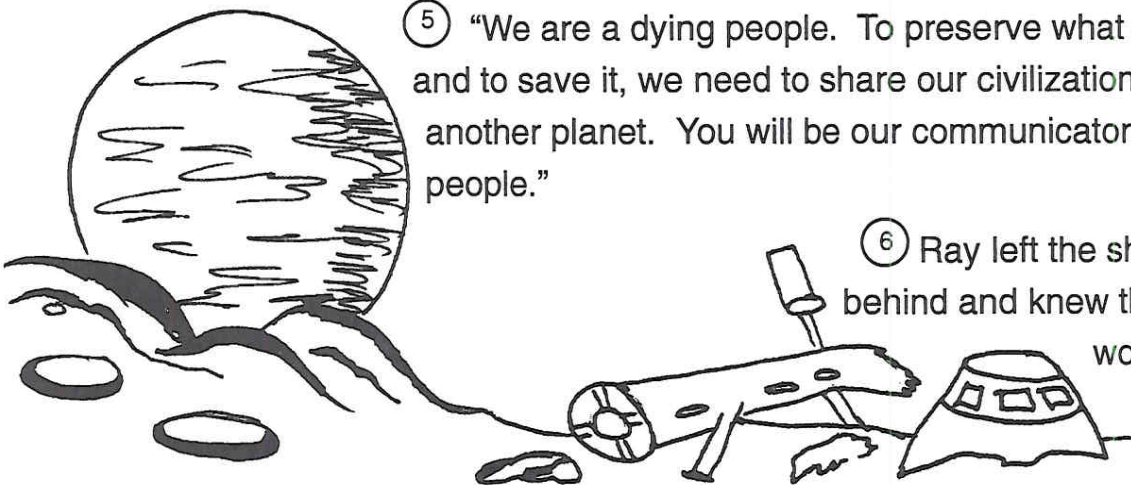
"What test?" Ray asked.

"We needed to find out if your species was intelligent enough to communicate with us."

"Why did you need to communicate with us?" asked Ray.

⑤ "We are a dying people. To preserve what we have learned and to save it, we need to share our civilization with beings from another planet. You will be our communicator. Go and tell your people."

⑥ Ray left the shimmering gate behind and knew that their mission would be successfully accomplished.





## The Conductor

Harriet Tubman's name continues to ring down the halls of our country's history. After Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the U.S. and signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Harriet no longer needed to put her life in constant danger as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. She was able to say, "I can say what most conductors can't, I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger."

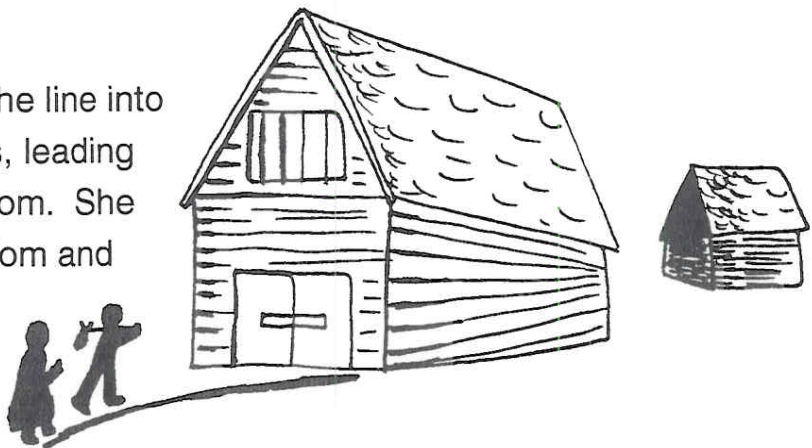
Harriet was born into slavery and knew only hard work and hunger. Escape seemed impossible. Yet Harriet was strong-willed and courageous. "Someday," she said, "I'm going to be free."

Harriet escaped to the North by the secret route called the Underground Railroad. She didn't forget her people. Again and again, she risked her life to lead them on the same secret, dangerous journey. Eleven times in the years between 1851 and 1857, she crossed the border between the U.S. and Canada.

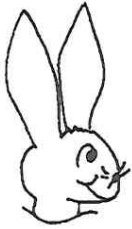
Harriet Tubman was fearless. She became a legend to her people. "Her eyes can pierce the distance like an eagle. Like a cat she can see into the darkest night," a woman said. Even though Harriet was fearless, she was never reckless. Each expedition into enemy territory was thoughtfully planned and carefully executed with a combination of courage and cunning.

As she took slaves north, she was all kindness, yet hard as granite. She would carry exhausted men or women in her arms, bind their wounds and deny herself to feed them. If terror made them weak, there was no turning back. Harriet had her gun and let them know the rules, "Move or die. Dead men tell no tales."

Harriet Tubman crossed the line into enemy territory nineteen times, leading more than 300 slaves to freedom. She conducted her people to freedom and dignity.



## Rabbit's Advice : A Fable



The sun poured into the fresh, green meadow surrounding the pond. Rabbit was watching Beaver gnaw through birch trees and drag them over to heap on her new lodge. As Beaver waddled by, Rabbit said, "Beaver, when you gnaw down trees, you should start closer to the ground. Another thing, when you drag the tree to your lodge, throw it higher because you have lots of branches on the sides already." Beaver looked at Rabbit tolerantly and said, "Thanks for the advice, Rabbit."

"Any time," said Rabbit as he hopped away with his ears perked up proudly.

As Rabbit nibbled on a clump of sweet clover, Mouse scampered by with an acorn stuffed in his mouth. Rabbit stopped eating. "Mouse, if you'd eat your acorn when you find it," said Rabbit, "you wouldn't have to drag it all the way home. Another thing, you should move your house closer to where the food is so you won't have to carry it so far." Mouse nodded politely and continued home to feed his wife and their new babies.

Rabbit noticed the sun sliding behind the mountain peaks and headed for home. On the way, he heard low voices. He stopped to listen. Two coyotes were thinking about their evening meal.

"You sneak up on Beaver and I'll jump her from behind. What a tasty morsel she'll be," said Coyote.

"Mmmmm, I can taste it already," agreed his brother.

Rabbit zipped through the meadow to Beaver's lodge to find Beaver still working diligently.

"Beaver, Beaver, do I ever have some advice for you! This is probably the best advice you'll ever get," said Rabbit jumping up and down. "You need to get away from here. Go hide in the woods. Some coyotes are coming to have you for their evening meal!"

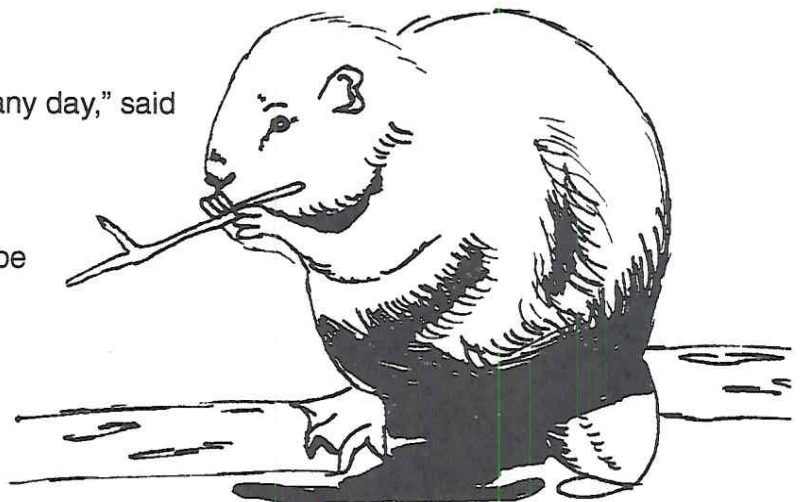
### STOP

Rabbit kept babbling when all of a sudden, Beaver dove into her pond. Beaver swam quickly through her underground tunnel into her lodge. Rabbit stood staring with his mouth open at the little waves rippling from Beaver's dive.

"Let's get him!" shouted Coyote.

"I'd rather have Rabbit than Beaver any day," said Brother as they both pounced at once.

**Moral:** Advice not asked for should be advice not given.





## Discoveries in Medicine

People today have benefited from the discoveries of modern medicine. Since the year 1900, the average life span in the United States has risen from 47 to 74 years. Scientists continue to find new vaccines and study diseases which pose a threat to modern man.

Man's knowledge about medicine today would have been unfathomable to people who lived long ago. For example, life in Europe during the Middle Ages was filled with death and disease. In the year 1300, many children died before they were five years old. People were subject to epidemics of disease. The bubonic plague, often called the Black Death, was carried by lice found on rats. Many people had lice on their bodies. The Black Death spread throughout Europe and one of about every three Europeans died from the awful disease.

Several major advances in medicine have changed people's health and quality of life.

### Vaccinations

In the 1800's, Edward Jenner proved that the dreaded disease of smallpox could be prevented through vaccinations. Vaccines were developed for whooping cough, tetanus, diphtheria and only about 40 years ago, for polio and measles.

### Pasteurization

In 1881, Louis Pasteur discovered a process called pasteurization to kill the bacteria that is found in milk. The milk is heated for at least 30 minutes and then cooled.

### Controlled Infection

In the late 1800's, the Scottish physician Joseph Lister invented antiseptic surgery. He made sure that antiseptic substances which kill germs were used to seal up surgical wounds, to clean instruments, and to clean the hands of doctors and nurses. A now famous mouthwash was named for Joseph Lister.

No one knows what effect the next wave of medical discoveries will have on the future of mankind.



## Heading West

Brad woke up suddenly. The stars sparkled high overhead and the prairie winds spoke gently to him as he realized he had carelessly picketed his horse, Windwalker. He knew just where the great stallion would be – back at the grass they had crossed about an hour before making camp. He tugged on his boots and grabbed a canteen and a knife. His father had always taught him never to go out in the wilderness without water. The five covered wagons slept on as he slipped quietly away.

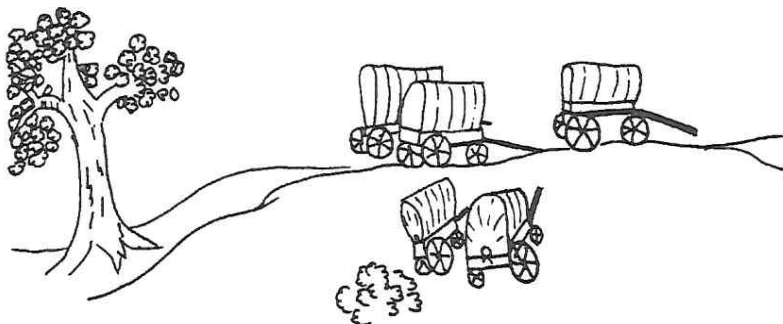
Windwalker was just where Brad had thought he'd be. Brad approached him, knowing the big stallion wouldn't run away. They had been raised together. Windwalker would have found Brad if Brad hadn't been worried about making the people on the wagon train wait.

Brad was traveling to meet his dad in Fort Bridger. A year ago, when Brad was eleven, his father had gone west to find land and raise horses. He had sent for Brad last month.

Brad grabbed Windwalker's rope and they walked back together through the tall prairie grass. Then Brad spotted smoke climbing up into the early dawn. He slowed as he reached the wagons and saw only blackened shells greeting him. There was no sign of anyone. The horses were all missing as well. There had been a lot of talk in the last town about a gang of outlaws. Brad knew they might still be nearby. He and Windwalker would have to be careful; Windwalker was a horse anyone would want.

Brad gathered any food he could find and packed it into an old feed sack. Just as he was about to ride off, he heard a small whimper. He followed the noise to a huge boulder behind one of the wagons and there was Lori – sweet, three-year-old Lori who always followed him everywhere. Brad gathered her up in his arms, showing a great deal of solicitude toward her. He hoisted her up on Windwalker and set off west,

heading to Fort Bridger. He knew he'd have to use everything his dad had taught him about survival in the wilderness to get him and Lori there safely.



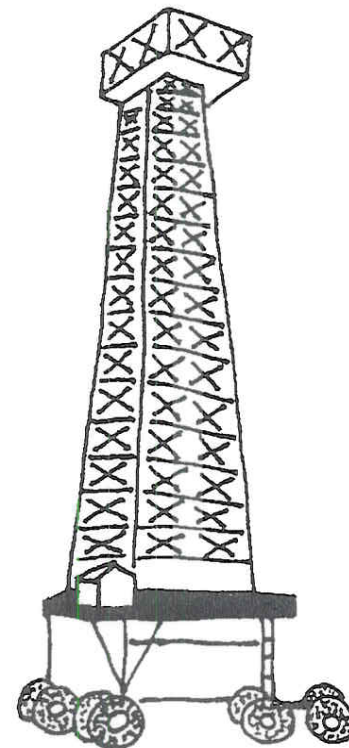
## Oil – Black Gold

Oil has been used for thousands of years. People in ancient times used oil in many ways. They collected it when it seeped out of the ground. Egyptians coated mummies in a gooey kind of oil called pitch. Ancient people in the Middle East used oil to waterproof ships and to make paint and medicine. The Incas of South America mixed oil with small stones to build houses and roads. Native Americans used oil for medicine and to burn for light and heat.

Today, we make many things out of oil. Petroleum is called *crude oil* when it first comes out of the ground. It's a mixture of chemicals called *hydrocarbons*. To make different things out of crude oil, some of the hydrocarbons have to be separated. This happens in an oil refinery.

When the oil is heated in a refinery tower, heavy hydrocarbons stay at the bottom and light ones rise to the top. The heaviest hydrocarbons make the black goo that is used to pave roads and repair roofs. Other heavy hydrocarbons become grease and fuel for ships. Lighter hydrocarbons make diesel fuel, heating oil, jet fuel and gasoline.

These hydrocarbons can be mixed with each other and with other chemicals to make still more chemicals. That's how we get detergents, fertilizers, plastics and many of the other things that we use every day.





The White House Letter

May 20, 1996  
San Antonio, Texas

The White House  
Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, D.C.

Dear White House Staff:

I am studying about the White House because I am very interested in the architecture and history of the building. Not only am I writing a research report and building a model, but I also plan to visit the White House this summer with my family.

Would you please send me any historical or architectural information you have on the building of the White House?

Also, I would like a schedule of your summer visiting hours. Would it be possible for me to tour the White House and meet the president while I am there?

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Jerry Ford