GRADE 5 · PRACTICE PAPER 1

Reading Magazine

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HOW TO USE THIS MAGAZINE

Use this magazine with the question paper “Reading Grade 5 — Practice Paper 1”. Each part of the question paper tells you which text to read and the page it is on. Read the text first, then answer its questions. You may look back at the magazine as often as you like.

PrepNest

The violin

Anika’s grandfather kept his violin in a case under his bed. The case was black and scratched, and the clasps squeaked when you opened them.

“I played this on the ship that brought me to Australia,” Dadu told her. “Every night, for six weeks. It was the only thing that stopped me feeling homesick.”

When Anika was nine, he put the case in her arms. “It is yours now,” he said. “My fingers are too stiff to play, but yours are not.”

Anika was delighted — until she tried to play it. The bow screeched across the strings like a cat whose tail had been stepped on. Her dog, Pepper, got up and left the room.

For weeks, every note came out wrong. Her fingers ached. Twice she put the violin back in its case and announced that she was giving up. Both times, the next afternoon, she opened the squeaky clasps again.

Slowly, the screeches turned into notes, and the notes turned into tunes. By winter she could play the song Dadu used to hum while he cooked, a gentle, rocking tune from the village where he grew up. Her teacher helped her write it down, because nobody had ever written it down before.

On Dadu’s eightieth birthday, the family squeezed into his small lounge room. Anika lifted the violin to her chin. Her hands were shaking. She took a deep breath and began to play.

Halfway through, she looked up. Dadu’s eyes were closed and there were tears on his cheeks. Anika almost stopped, but her mother gave a tiny nod, so she kept going.

When the last note faded, Dadu opened his eyes. “For sixty years that song lived only in my head,” he said quietly. “Now it lives in yours.”

PrepNest

Antarctica

Antarctica is the continent at the very bottom of the world. It is the coldest, windiest and driest continent on Earth. Almost all of it is covered by a sheet of ice that is, in places, more than four kilometres thick.

A frozen desert

Although Antarctica is covered in ice, very little new snow falls there each year. Because it gets so little rain or snow, scientists call it a desert. In winter, the temperature can drop below minus 80 degrees Celsius.

Who lives there?

No people live in Antarctica permanently. About a thousand scientists and support staff stay through the winter, and several thousand more arrive in summer. They study the ice, the weather and the animals.

The animals that live there are suited to the cold. Emperor penguins huddle together in groups of thousands to keep warm. Seals have a thick layer of fat, called blubber, under their skin.

Protecting Antarctica

In 1959, twelve countries signed an agreement called the Antarctic Treaty. They agreed that Antarctica would be used only for peaceful purposes and for science. Today more than fifty countries have signed it, and mining is not allowed.

Antarctica at a glance

- Size: almost twice as big as Australia
- Lowest temperature recorded: minus 89 degrees Celsius
- Its ice holds about 70 per cent of the world’s fresh water

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Should homework be banned?

Two readers wrote to the Hillview Gazette.

Yes — let kids be kids

After six hours at school, children need time to play, rest and be with their families. Many nights my son spends an hour on homework sheets that he could finish in ten minutes if they were not so boring. By the time he is done, it is dark, and he has missed his chance to kick a ball in the park.

Some people say homework teaches children to work on their own. But children can learn that at school, with a teacher there to help. Let’s ban homework and give childhood back to our kids.

Maria Costa, parent

No — practice makes progress

I am in Year 5 and I think homework is useful. When I practice my times tables at home, I remember them better in class the next day. Homework also shows my parents what I am learning, so they can help me.

I agree that homework should not be boring or take too long. Twenty minutes a night is plenty. But banning it completely would be like a soccer team that only trains on game day.

Tom Nguyen, age 10

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