

Name _____

Word Count: 137

A Gecko's Tale

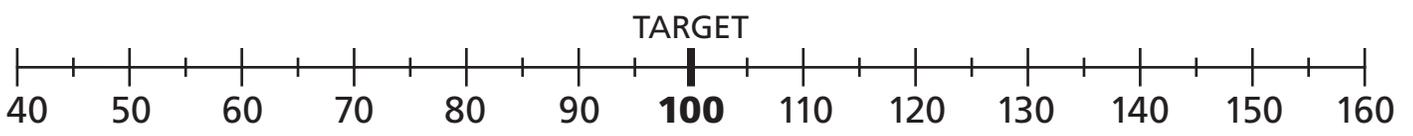
If a gecko could talk, it might tell you an amazing tale.	12
What's the story? Why, it's about a tail—a gecko's tail.	23
A gecko is a kind of lizard. Geckos live in warm places such as rainforests, deserts, grasslands, and marshes.	35
Many people also keep them as pets.	49
Geckos come in all sizes. Some kinds are only the length of your fingernail, and others are longer than your foot.	60
Geckos hunt for food at night. They move quickly and silently, so they can catch crickets and roaches. Sometimes they eat small birds and mice.	80
A gecko has a short, thick tail. Its tail helps it survive.	107
What happens when another animal catches a gecko?	115
The gecko lets go of its tail and escapes! Later, it grows a new one. Now that's an amazing, but true, tale!	127
	137

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 190

Beauty at the Beach

“Have you ever seen a photograph of Earth taken from space?” asked Aunt Cammy. “You see that Earth is mostly blue because most of Earth is water. The mighty oceans cover a large part of Earth.”

10
20
30
36

“I’d like to see the ocean,” Keith said. “Can we go?”

47

Aunt Cammy said, “Great idea! Let’s take a ‘beauty walk’ at the beach. We’ll stop and look at things we find beautiful. Too many times we just walk right by.” Keith ran to get his bathing suit.

57
69
82
84

When they got to the beach, Aunt Cammy said, “Isn’t the white sand beautiful? It is smooth and sparkles in the sun like diamonds.”

94
105
108

Keith and Aunt Cammy walked along the ocean’s edge. Keith stopped and gazed at a seashell that was the color of the moon.

117
128
131

Name _____

Word Count: 190

Aunt Cammy pointed to a starfish. Keith bent down. 140
Suddenly, a wave washed it away! Aunt Cammy grabbed 149
Keith's arm so he wouldn't wash away, too. 157

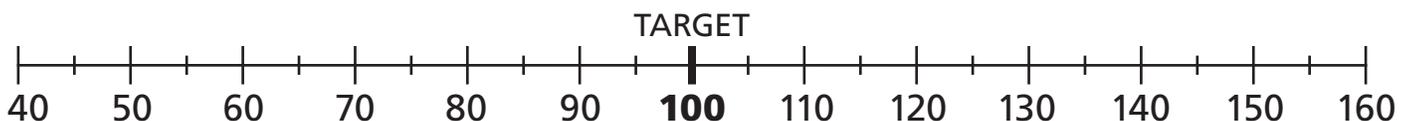
They played in the surf, sat in the sun, walked, and 168
looked. They talked about each beautiful thing they 176
found. They didn't pick anything up. They left things 185
for someone else to enjoy. 190

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 144

Journal

7:00 A.M.

Today, I am going to visit a castle in The Netherlands.	11
I will walk where nobles have walked. Muider slot Castle	20
is a place where peasants lived beyond the castle gates.	30
I wonder whether the commoners enjoyed the tulips	38
surrounding the castle grounds.	42

9:00 A.M.

We arrive at the castle. On each corner of the castle are	54
the turrets , or towers, that appear to be the strong guardians	65
of the castle's inhabitants.	69

9:15 A.M.

The tour guide introduces us to the drawbridge. Then it	79
is lowered for us to cross over the moat and into the castle.	92
I look into the waters of the moat to see whether there are	105
any monsters under the bridge.	110

Name _____

Word Count: 144

9:30 A.M.

Once inside, the guide tells us that the logs with metal 121
on them are called **battering rams**. They were used to 131
break down a castle's gates. 136

11:00 A.M.

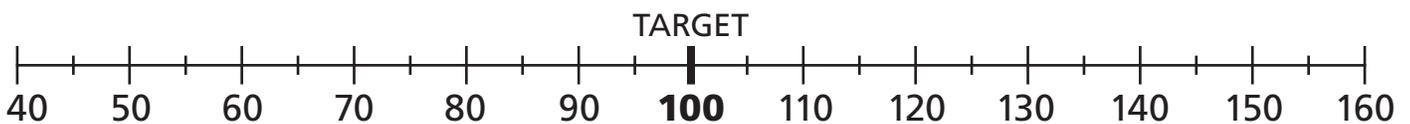
Too much to see. I'll write more later. 144

Number of Errors

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Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 172

Living in the Dark Zone

There are some creatures most people have never seen. 9
 These creatures never see you, either. They live in the dark 20
 zone. The dark zone isn't a place in outer space. It's the area 33
 deep within a cave. 37

This cool, dark zone is home to all sorts of animals. 48
 Sunlight never reaches the dark zone. Many of these animals, 58
 such as the blind crayfish, cannot see. Yet this is not a 70
 problem. Animals that live here use other senses to stay alive. 81

Some dark zone animals have no eyes. The Texas blind 91
 salamander is one example. The Texas blind salamander 99
 has two small black dots under its skin where eyes would 110
 be found. It hunts in cave water for tiny snails and shrimp. 122

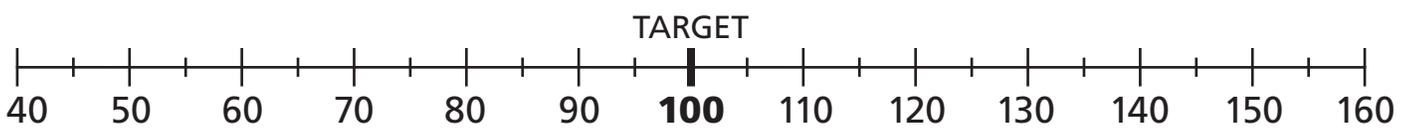
How can it find food if it can't see? It hunts for food in 136
 a special way. A snail or shrimp makes small waves when 147
 it moves in the water. The salamander can feel where the 158
 waves come from. Then it knows that dinner is close by. 169
 Watch out, snail! 172

Number of Errors

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Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 177

My Aquarium Visit

It was Saturday morning, and my dad surprised me with a trip to the aquarium. I got to see **plankton** through a microscope and dozens of jellyfish glowing in the water. We saw lots of amazing animals, but we saved the best for last. At the end of the day, Dad took me to see the hammerhead sharks.

We looked down on the giant tank from above. I could make out the strange shapes of the sharks' heads as they swam back and forth. I even saw a large **dorsal fin** sticking out of the water, just as in cartoons and movies.

The best part was when we went in the tunnel under the tank. The tunnel was clear, so we could see everything! I asked Dad why the sharks were white on the bottom and dark on top. He told me that it was their **camouflage** pattern. He also told me how their skeletons were made out of **cartilage** instead of bones.

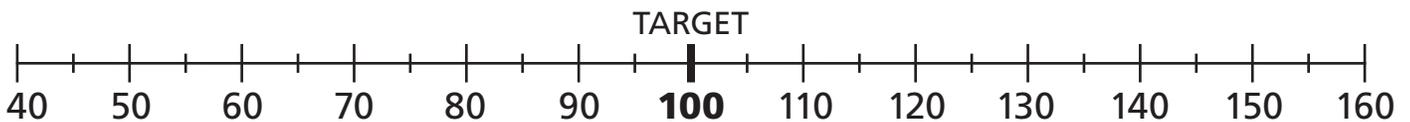
I hope we can save sharks from **extinction**. They really are wonders of nature.

Number of Errors

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Accuracy (%):

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Name _____

Word Count: 204

My Penguin Summer

“Here you are, Elisabeth,” said Dr. Uribe. “I believe you’re ready.” After just three days, I had become a penguin washer. I walked into the washing room. I held a toothbrush and a pair of gloves.

At first I was a bit nervous. Then I remembered what Dad had told me earlier. “Just treat them like the animals back home. Keep the penguins calm and handle them gently.”

I put on my gloves. Then I was paired with a girl named Kali. “Washing a penguin is a two-person job,” she told me.

I quickly learned that washing a penguin takes about 30 minutes. If a penguin is covered with lots of oil, it takes much longer, though.

First, the handler picks up a penguin from a pen and carries it to the washing room. Then the handler puts it in a little tub of warm water. He or she tries to keep the penguin calm so it won’t bite or die of shock.

Name _____

Word Count: 204

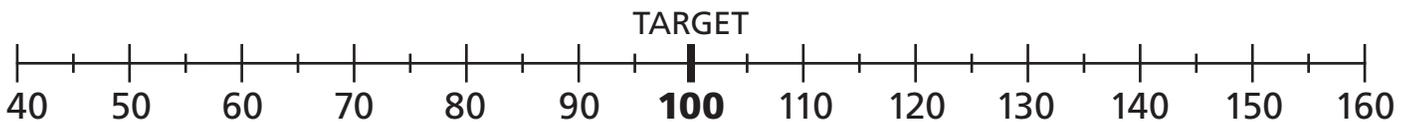
As the washer, it was my job to clean the oil from its body.	177
I used a special soap. First, I picked up a toothbrush. Then	189
I used it to gently clean the sticky oil from the penguin's	201
face and head.	204

Number of Errors

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Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 171

World's Largest Flower

The Titan Arum is called the “world’s largest flower.” 9
 It is often called something else, though. Some people 18
 call it “Mr. Stinky.” 22

The Titan was first found in Indonesia. It has one large 33
 leaf shaped like an umbrella. But this is not a leaf you would 46
 see growing in most gardens. It can grow to be twenty feet 58
 high and fifteen feet across. The stem of the leaf is as big 71
 as a person’s thigh! But the leaf is not the most interesting 83
 part of the plant. It’s the flower of the Titan that gets all the 97
 attention. 98

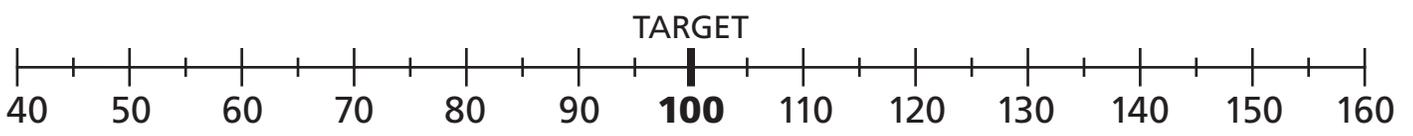
The Titan has only one flower. What an amazing flower 108
 it is. The flower is more than seven feet tall. That’s taller 120
 than most grown men! The flower only lasts two to three 131
 days. It’s not a flower anyone would want to sniff, though. 142
 The flower of the Titan Arum gives off a strong odor. The 154
 smell has been described as “rotting fish with burnt sugar.” 164
 The stinky odor lasts about eight hours. 171

Number of Errors

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Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 135

Early Days in Philadelphia

For years, Native Americans lived around the place that would become Philadelphia. Then, in the 1600s, explorers from Europe began to explore the area. They were drawn by the many natural resources.

In 1682, the King of England gave William Penn a large area of land surrounding this place. Penn decided to build a city where others had lived before him. It would be the capital of his colony. He began by building his own home, which was the first brick house built in this country.

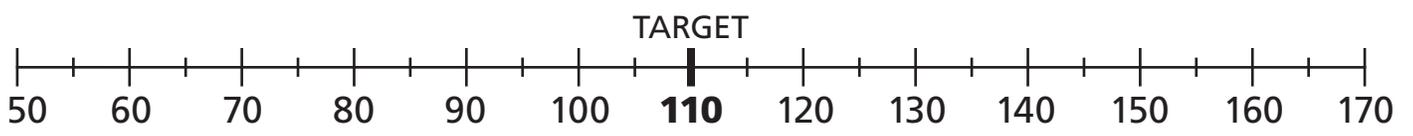
The city grew quickly. It was located on water and land trade routes. This helped it become a busy shipping center. New businesses started. By 1760, it had become the largest city in the land. Because so many leaders lived there, it also became the birthplace of our government.

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 186

I Want to Jump!

After spending a day with the Sky-Bombers, I was ready to take the plunge! It all started with a school project. Our teacher asked us to find out about a group in town. Mom has been a member of a skydiving club for years. She invited me to join her at the next meeting.

First, Mom took me on a tour of the clubhouse and showed me the equipment the group uses. She also explained how the different **instruments** help the divers in the air. Then, we met the other club members.

Everyone was great! They loved telling me about their first jump. Most of them have made over 200 jumps since then. A few of them dive together. They do **acrobatics** in the air. It takes hours of practice to perfect their **techniques**.

Name _____

Word Count: 186

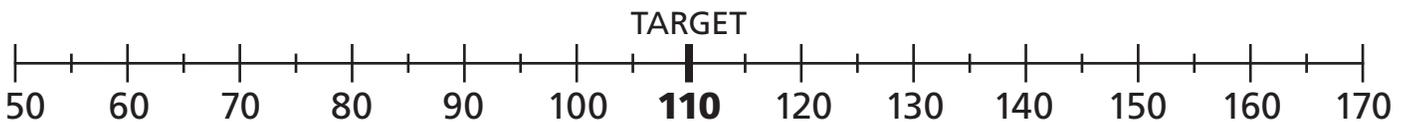
I got some great information for my project. Best of all, 145
Mom agreed to take me on my first **tandem** jump when 156
I turn 16. I can't wait to feel the **adrenaline** rush as I take 170
that first step from the plane. Just think of the view from 182
the dizzying heights above! 186

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 159

Lily

Laurel lives in a **magical** village of green grass and colorful flowers. Laurel is an **amiable** girl liked by everyone. She has an **imaginary** friend she calls Lily.

Laurel asks her mother the names of all the flowers she sees. “Come here, Mom,” says Laurel. “What kind of flower is this one?”

“Oh, be careful, Laurel, that is a **snapdragon**. Don’t get too close,” warns Mom.

Just as Laurel bends over to smell the flower, Mom shouts, “Don’t get your nose too close! The snapdragon will bite it off!”

“Aw, Mom,” says Laurel as she jumps up holding her nose.

Suddenly, all the flowers **vanish** except one; a single white lily stands proud. Her skirt, made of thousands of tiny white bells, looks like the flowing train of a bridal gown covering

Name _____

Word Count: 159

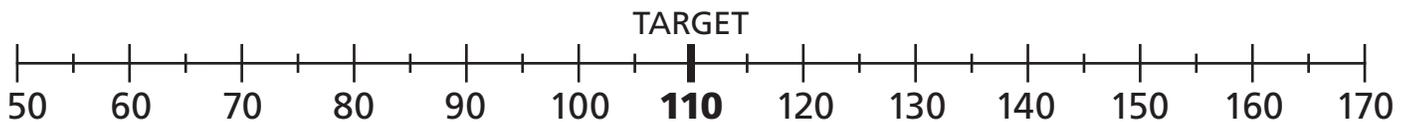
the green **clover**. Laurel's imaginary friend stands proud 140
and statuesque in the center of the village. Those who 150
admire her beauty call her Lily of the Valley. 159

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 153

Molly's New Friend

Molly and her mom were busy canning the vegetables 9
 they had grown in the garden. These preserved foods would 19
 take them through the long winter. The days were getting 29
 shorter, so Molly knew that colder weather was on its way. 40

Suddenly, Molly heard an unfamiliar noise outside the 48
 window. Her curiosity got the best of her. She put down her 60
 spoon and went to explore. It took her no time to discover 72
 a fluffy duckling. 75

It seemed to have a broken wing. Molly knew the injured 86
 animal needed help. It would not survive the winter with a 97
 broken wing. As she scooped up the duckling, it flapped its 108
 one good wing against her hands, trying to gain its freedom. 119

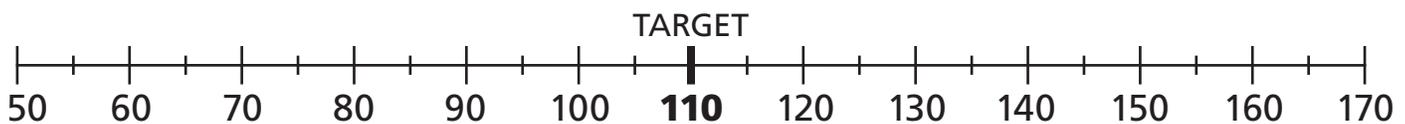
"You may want to escape now," Molly said gently, "but 129
 you'll be glad to have that wing fixed when the cold winter 141
 comes!" Molly helped the duckling and then returned to 150
 canning the vegetables. 153

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

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Name _____

Word Count: 160

Prairie Dog Town

Prairie dogs are not what their name might suggest. 9

While it's true that prairie dogs live on the prairie, they are 21

not dogs at all. Prairie dogs are really ground squirrels, 31

members of the rodent family. Prairie dogs are commonly 40

found in the western parts of the United States and Mexico. 51

They got the name "dogs" because they make small barking 61

sounds to warn each other of danger. 68

Prairie dogs are social animals that prefer to live in large 79

groups or *towns*. They are good at digging holes and live in 91

burrows. Prairie dogs search for food in the day and return 102

to their burrows to sleep at night. They mostly eat grass, 113

seeds, leaves, flowers, and fruit. Sometimes prairie dogs 121

eat insects as well. 125

Many prairie animals like to hunt prairie dogs. What 134

does a prairie dog do when a wolf, fox, or bobcat sneaks 146

up on it, ready to pounce? *Zip!* The prairie dog scrambles 157

into its burrow. 160

Number of Errors

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Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 187

The Desert Monster

Casey woke up with a start. “What’s that noise?”	9
Jonica rubbed her eyes and sat up in the tent. “What noise?” she asked. Then, she heard it, too. They grabbed a flashlight and climbed out of the tent, careful not to wake their parents.	21 32 44
“The desert is home to all sorts of creatures,” said Casey.	46
“I sure hope we don’t find one.”	62
“You’re letting your imagination run wild,” Jonica replied, clinging to Casey’s shirt. They crept along the path near the campsite. Whooo! Casey aimed the flashlight at the sound.	70 81 90
“Look!” yelled Jonica. “It’s a monster with two huge arms! It has gigantic eyes and a mouth!” The girls dashed back to the tent and hid under the covers. When day broke, they cautiously climbed out of the tent. “Maybe the monster’s gone,” said Jonica.	100 111 123 132 135

Name _____

Word Count: 187

They walked along the path. Then Casey let out a loud laugh. The girls stood before a huge saguaro cactus. Its branches looked like arms.

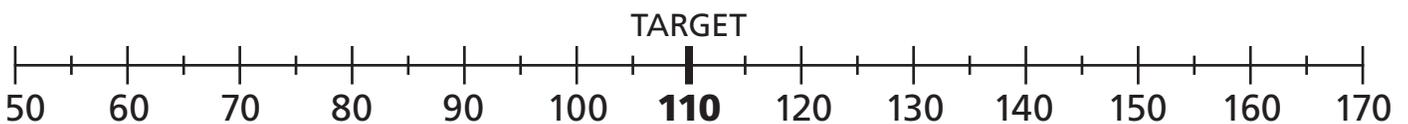
Three woodpecker holes formed two eyes and a mouth. Inside the “mouth” was a tiny owl. “Look at our desert monster now!” said Casey with a laugh.

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name _____

Word Count: 125

The Liberty Bell

To many Americans, the Liberty Bell is a symbol of freedom. The bell was built in England. After arriving in America, it was hung in a special place. Soon after its arrival, though, the bell cracked! American workers fixed it. For more than 100 years, it rang out to announce news or celebrate special events.

In the late 1800s, people began taking the Liberty Bell around the country. The bell helped people remember the freedoms others had worked for and fought to gain. Then, in 1915, the bell returned home.

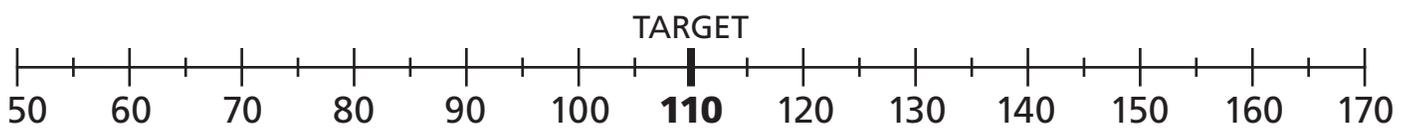
Today, the bell is part of a museum. There, people learn how settlers in the colonies shaped our government. The Liberty Bell no longer is rung, but it continues to stand for an important idea.

Number of Errors

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Accuracy (%):

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Name _____

Word Count: 183

Would You Try It?

Surprise! 1

Have you ever eaten at an exotic restaurant to discover 11
 a new flavor you've never tried before? Have you ever 21
 eaten a **delicacy** or a chef's **specialty**? Eating new foods 31
 can surprise you. 34

New foods may seem strange at first. You may be afraid to 46
 try them, but it's likely you'll discover something new and 56
 delicious if you keep trying. Have you ever thought of dining 67
 on French **escargots** with garlic butter to begin your meal, 77
 or Italian **cannoli** for dessert? Would you try beautiful 86
 Japanese **sushi** made with different kinds of fish? 94

Foods from other countries have many different flavors. 102
 The food of each region of a country may differ from that 114
 of other regions. Different ingredients provide different 121
 flavors. You may not have heard of some of the ingredients 132
 a person in another country uses. 138

Name _____

Word Count: 183

You do not need to go to a different country to find new, 151
incredible dishes and recipes. Try making a recipe at home, 161
or eating at a restaurant you don't normally visit. Give it 172
a try. It just might be a fun thing to do! 183

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):

