



SAMPLES OF STANDARDS STUDENTS ARE LEARNING THIS NINE WEEKS:

4th Grade ELA

STANDARDS: RL.4.1, RL.4.7, RI.4.3, RI.4.4, RI.4.5, RI.4.8, W.4.1

Pecos Bill Captures the Pacing White Mustang

by Leigh Peck



- 1 Pecos Bill decided to get a real cowpony, and he asked cowboys, “What’s the very best horse in these parts?”
- 2 They answered: “The best horse in all the world is running loose in these very hills. He runs fast as the lightning, so we call him Lightning. Others call him the Pacing White Mustang, and some even say that his real name is Pegasus. We have all tried hard to catch him, but no one has ever got close enough to him to put a rope on him or even to see him clearly. We have chased him for days, riding our very best ponies and changing horses every two hours, but he outran all our best ponies put together.”
- 3 But Pecos Bill told them: “I’ll not ride a cowpony when I chase this horse. I can run faster myself than any of your ponies can.”

4 Pecos Bill threw his saddle and bridle over his shoulder and set out on foot to look for the famous wild white horse. When he got close enough to take a good look at Lightning, he saw that only the horse's mane and tail were pure white. The beautiful animal was really a light cream or pale gold color—the color of lightning itself. The Spanish people in the Southwest call such a horse a *palomino*. He chased Lightning five days and four nights, all the way from Mexico across Texas and New Mexico and Arizona and Utah and Colorado and Wyoming and Montana, clear up to Canada, and then down to Mexico again. Pecos Bill had to throw away his saddle and bridle, as they leaped across cactus-covered plains, down steep cliffs, and across canyons.

5 Finally Lightning got tired of running from Pecos Bill and stopped and snorted. "Very well, I'll let you try to ride me if you think you can! Go ahead and jump on!"

6 Pecos Bill smiled. And he jumped on Lightning's back, gripping the horse's ribs with his knees and clutching the mane with his hands.

7 First, Lightning tried to run out from under Pecos Bill. He ran ten miles in twenty seconds! Next he jumped a mile forward and two miles backward. Then he jumped so high in the air that Pecos Bill's head was up among the stars. Next Lightning tried to push Pecos Bill off his back by running through clumps of mesquite trees. The thorns tore poor Pecos Bill's face.

8 When that failed, too, Lightning reared up on his hind legs and threw himself over backward. But Pecos Bill jumped off quickly, and before Lightning could get on his feet again, Bill sat on his shoulders and held him firmly on the ground.

9 "Lightning," Pecos Bill explained, "you are the best horse in all the world, and I am the best cowboy in all the world. If you'll let me ride you, we will become famous together, and cowboys everywhere forever and forever will praise the deeds of Pecos Bill and Lightning."

10 Then Pecos Bill turned Lightning loose and told him, "You may decide. You are free to go or to stay with me."

11 The beautiful horse put his nose in Pecos Bill's hand, and said, "I want to stay with you and be your cowpony—the greatest cowpony in all the world."

12 Pecos Bill and Lightning went back and found the saddle and bridle where Bill had thrown them. Lightning let Pecos Bill put the saddle on him, but he didn't want to take the bit of the bridle into his mouth. So, Pecos Bill just put a halter on him, and guided him by pressure of the knees and by pulling on the reins of the halter.

13 Lightning would not let anybody but Pecos Bill ride him.

Pecos Bill **most likely** thinks he needs to have the very best horse because

- A. he wants a horse that matches his skill
- B. he thinks that a good horse is worth a lot of money
- C. he feels he has to work harder than the other cowboys
- D. he wants to show off in front of the other cowboys

RL.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Rationale: Option A is correct. Students who choose “A” rely on a character’s statements for clues to his motivation. In paragraph 1, Pecos Bill asks, “What’s the very best horse in these parts?” Later, in paragraph 9, he says, “Lightning, . . . you are the best horse in all the world, and I am the best cowboy in all the world.” This statement provides the clue to the most likely reason for his determination to have “the very best horse.”

Excerpt from *Lawn Boy*

By Gary Paulsen



1 Okay. Since I was twelve, I didn’t have much experience with motors. I’ve never even had a dirt bike or four-wheeler. I’m just not machine oriented.

2 My birthday present sat there. I tried pushing it toward our garage, but it didn’t seem to want to move. Even turning around to put my back against it and push with my legs—which I thought might give me better leverage—didn’t help; it still sat there.

3 So I studied it. On the left side of the motor was a small gas tank, and I unscrewed the top and looked in. Yep, gas. On top of the tank were two levers; the first was next to pictures of a rabbit and a turtle. Even though I’m

not good with machines, I figured out that was the throttle and the pictures meant fast and slow. The other lever said ON-OFF. I pushed ON.

4 Nothing happened, of course. On the very top of the motor was a starting pull-rope. What the heck, why not? I gave it a jerk and the motor sputtered a little, popped once, then died. I pulled the rope again and the motor hesitated, popped, and then roared to life. I jumped back. No muffler.

5 Once when I was little, my grandmother, in her usual logic-defying fashion, answered my request for another cookie by saying that my grandfather had been a tinkerer. “He was always puttering with things, taking them apart, putting them back together. When he was around nothing ever broke. Nothing ever *dared* to break.”

6 Loud as the mower was, it still wasn’t moving and the blade wasn’t going around. I stood looking down at it.

7 This strange thing happened.

8 It spoke to me.

9 Well, not really. I’m not one of those woo-woo people or a wack job. At least I don’t think I was. Maybe I am now.

10 Anyway, there was some message that came from the mower through the air and into my brain. A kind of warm, or maybe settled feeling. Like I was supposed to be there and so was the mower. The two of us.

11 Like it was a friend. So all right, I know how *that* sounds too: We’ll sit under a tree and talk to each other. Read poems about mowing. Totally wack.

12 But the feeling was there.

13 Next I found myself sitting on the mower, my feet on the pedals. I moved the throttle to the rabbit position—it had been on turtle—and pushed the left pedal down, and the blade started whirring. The mower seemed to give a happy leap forward off the sidewalk and I was mowing the lawn.

14 Or dirt. As I said, we didn’t really have much of a lawn. Dust and bits of dead grass flew everywhere and until I figured out the steering, the mailbox, my mother’s flowers near the front step and a small bush were in danger.

15 But in a few minutes I got control of the thing and I sheared off what little grass there was.

16 The front lawn didn’t take long, but before I was done the next-door neighbor came to the fence, attracted by the dust cloud. He waved me over.

17 I stopped in front of him, pulled the throttle back and killed the engine. The sudden silence was almost deafening. I stood up away from the mower, my ears humming, so I could hear him.

- 18 “You mow lawns?” he asked. “How much?”
19 And that was how it started.

The illustration **best** helps the reader to understand

- A. paragraph 4
- B. paragraph 6
- C. paragraph 15
- D. paragraph 17

RL.4.7

Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

Rationale: Choice C is correct. Students who choose “C” recognize that the paragraph that is explained by the illustration must refer to the narrator mowing the lawn after he has been able to start the motor and steer the machine. The illustration shows the lawnmower in motion. Paragraph 15 says that he has gained control of the mower and is able to shear “what little grass there was.”

When Animals Snoozzzzzze

by Elizabeth Schleichert

1 Cat nap, anyone? Big cats are big sleepers. They may doze 12 to 20 hours a day, and in all kinds of places. Leopards sprawl out on branches. Lions and tigers doze every which way on the ground. But cats aren’t the only animals to kick back and catch some zzz’s! The animal world is filled with sleepyheads.

SNOOZING BASICS

2 But wait! What exactly is sleep? Here’s how many scientists define it: Sleep is a period of rest when an animal is less aware of its surroundings. The animal’s breathing and heartbeat slow down. And its brain waves show a pattern that is different from when the animal is awake.

3 Why do animals sleep? Many experts say sleep brings animals back to peak performance. It restores their bodies and gives them new energy to go about their normal activities. It’s kind of like recharging a cell phone.

CHILL-OUT ARTISTS

4 Bet you’re wondering if all animals sleep. Mammals and birds do, for sure. (They may also dream.) But what about other animals—reptiles, fish, amphibians, and insects, for instance? It’s not so easy to tell what’s going on with them, and experts disagree about whether they sleep.

5 Still some of these animals often *look* as if they're sleeping. It's just that their brain waves don't show the usual sleep patterns. Who knows? Maybe they're just having a slightly different *kind* of sleep.

WHATEVER WORKS!

6 Sleeping animals doze in different ways. Take elephants. Like you, they lie down at night. But they don't always snooze straight through. They may rise and feed a bit, then settle back down again—averaging about five hours of sleep a night. During the day, the elephants in a herd nod off now and then. When the calves lie down to nap, the adults often gather around them in a protective circle.

7 Animals that are active at night often sleep during the day. Fruit bats in Africa, for example, roost (rest or sleep) in the daylight. They crowd together in trees. Here, thousands of them hang upside down by their rear feet, which automatically tighten and get a grip so the bats don't fall.

NORTHERN NAPS

8 Polar bears nap when there's nothing better to do, especially after big meals. In summer, they may flop down on ice or snow—not just to sleep, but also to cool off. With its super-warm coat, a bear can easily overheat. So it has to chill out!

9 Other animals living in snowy places have the opposite problem: how to stay warm while sleeping! Foxes curl up and use their tails as scarves to help keep the cold off.

FISHY TRICKS

10 Fish brain waves may never show sleep patterns, but many fish seem to do some serious resting. The parrotfish, for example, squeezes itself into a rocky crevice at night and puts up its very own "tent." The tent is actually a bubble made of clear mucus. The mucus oozes from the fish's mouth, forming a protective sac. The mucus may keep tiny pests away, as well as help hide the fish's scent from eels and other predators. The bubble may also act as an alarm. If a predator touches it, the parrotfish "wakes up," bursts out, and swims off.

SPLISH, SPLASH, YAWN

11 Water is where you'll often find hippopotamuses sleeping, too. They loll their days away on river banks or in shallow lakes, using each other as puffy pillows. A hippo can doze nearly totally submerged but still be on the alert. That's because its eyes, ears, and nostrils are on top of its head. But don't be fooled by a sleeping hippo's lazy, lumpy looks. If alarmed, it can awaken and charge a would-be attacker in an instant.

SLEEP ON THE FLY?

12 An albatross spends most of its life gliding on wind currents at sea. How does it find time to sleep? Experts aren't sure. The bird may alight on the water's surface and sleep there. Or, while flying, it may close down half of its brain—keeping the other half awake—for several seconds at a time.

PAUSE THAT REFRESHES

13 Many grazing animals live out in the open. They have to be on guard, ready to run from danger. So they often snatch short naps. Horses, for instance, sleep for only a few minutes at a time, often while standing. A horse's legs can "lock" in place, so the animal can sleep without the risk of falling down!

14 *So now you know what's up when animals settle down!*

Read these sentences from paragraph 11 of the article.

A hippo can doze nearly totally submerged but still be on the alert. That's because its eyes, ears, and nostrils are on top of its head.

What is the meaning of "submerged" as it is used here?

- A. relaxed
- B. on the shore
- C. sound asleep
- D. beneath the surface**

RI.4.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

Rationale: Choice D is Correct. Students who chose "D" show they are able to connect the clue of the hippo's eyes, ears, and nostrils being on top of its head with the detail of being able to be alert while sleeping nearly submerged. The combination of this evidence leads them to the understanding that "submerged" means "beneath the surface" of water.

Which sentence supports the idea that scientists are **not** certain that all animals sleep?

- A. "Many experts say sleep brings animals back to peak performance." (paragraph 3)
- B. "It's just that their brain waves don't show the usual sleep patterns." (paragraph 5)**
- C. "An albatross spends most of its life gliding on wind currents at sea." (paragraph 12)
- D. "They have to be on guard, ready to run from danger." (paragraph 13)

RI.4.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

Rationale: Choice B is correct. Students who chose “B” have successfully identified that the fact that some animals’ brain waves do not show the usual sleep patterns has caused scientists to question whether all animals sleep, by using an understanding of the evidence both out of context and the way the author uses this evidence to make a point.

Bodies in Motion: Mountain Biking

by Edith H. Fine and Judith P. Josephson

Can you bike up a rocky hill, through a creek, over a fallen log, and through a field of boulders?

If you’re a mountain biker, you can—and love it!

Mountain bikers take their bikes where they never used to go, and they use special skills and equipment to do it. Would you like to try?

Getting Started

Mountain biking isn’t like riding down the street; you need a bike that can handle the bumps, bangs, and rough treatment off-road riding can offer. Check with friends who already take part in the sport. What kind of bike works best for them?

Ask questions at bike stores, but remember, they want to sell you a bike, so think carefully about what they tell you. Getting yourself in shape is important, too. Biking calls for strong leg and arm muscles, so don’t forget your deep knee bends and pushups. Before setting out, do your warm-ups and stretches. And when you’re done, a cool-down period and more stretching will help you keep from getting stiff and sore.

Skills

Maneuvering your bike on off-road trails calls for skills not usually used around your neighborhood. For example, can you wheelie? On a trail, a wheelie might be the best way to get over a fallen log. Broadslides, bunny-hops, and jumps will also be a part of your arsenal as you attack a biking trail.

You should even brush up on your braking techniques (rely more on your rear brakes when biking off-road) and your gear shifting to make sure you perform both smoothly and confidently even when things are happening. It’s also a good idea to work on your bike-repair skills. When mountain biking, you could have a flat tire, a bent rim, or a broken spoke miles from help.

You should know how to fix these things yourself.

Competition

Mountain bikers compete in four kinds of events:

- Cross Country—The winner is the first to make it through a tough course filled with obstacles like sharp turns, logs, rocks, streams, and jumps.
- Hill Climbs—Bikers compete to see who can ride their bikes up a steep, obstacle-filled hill.
- Trials—Not a speed race: bikers try to cross really tough obstacles like boulder piles, ledges, and ditches without putting a foot down, stopping, or falling. Judges observe and penalize riders who make errors.
- Downhills—Racers zoom down a downhill course. The rider with the best time wins.

Safety

Don't forget your safety precautions. Always wear a helmet, and arm and knee pads are a good idea, too. Also, remember to keep your equipment in great condition. Take care of your bike, and it will take care of you!

According to the "Competition" section of the article, why do some mountain biking events need to be watched closely?

- A. to keep track of riders' times
- B. to keep track of riders' mistakes**
- C. to make sure riders wear helmets
- D. to make sure riders are staying safe

RI.4.3: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

Rationale: Option B is correct. **Trials—Not a speed race: bikers try to cross really tough obstacles like boulder piles, ledges, and ditches without putting a foot down, stopping, or falling. Judges observe and penalize riders who make errors.**

According to the authors, how will training, learning about bike equipment, and wearing helmets and pads help riders?

- A. Riders will be prepared to safely enjoy mountain biking.**
- B. Riders will win mountain biking competitions.
- C. Riders will not get stiff and sore after biking.
- D. Riders will not get lost while biking.

RI.4.5: Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

Rationale. Option A is correct.

