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Why This Book?

This book was developed in response to the need from teachers for good texts for teaching reading fluency within the content areas, such as social studies. Fluency has become recognized as an essential element in elementary and middle-grade reading programs. The review of research by the National Reading Panel (2000) and others (e.g., Rasinski and Hoffman 2003) confirms that fluency is absolutely essential to reading success. Fluent readers are better able to comprehend what they read. They decode words so effortlessly that they can devote their cognitive resources to comprehension instead of bogging themselves down in decoding words they confront in their reading. They can also construct meaning (comprehension) by reading with appropriate expression and phrasing (Hackett 2013).

Readers develop fluency through guided practice and repeated readings with appropriate expression and phrasing. Regular repeated readings under the guidance and assistance of a teacher or other coach improves word recognition, reading rate, comprehension, and overall reading proficiency.

Rereading, Close Reading, and Practice

Students will find the poems in this book interesting and sometimes challenging. They will especially want to practice the poems if you provide regular opportunities to perform for their classmates, parents, or other audiences. So, have fun with these poems. Be assured that if you regularly have your students read and perform the poems in this book, you will go a long way toward developing fluent readers who are able to decode words effortlessly and construct meaning through their interpretations of texts. And as our student poet so clearly shared on page 7, students will enjoy hearing the stories of history through poetry.

Poems should be interpreted with meaning as the foremost guiding principle. Students should read to the punctuation as opposed to line-by-line. If you choose to divide the selections into parts, they should be divided with close attention to meaningful phrases and thoughts rather than just by the layout of the text.

The poems should be read repeatedly, or closely, over several days for expression and meaning. We recommend that you introduce one poem at a time and practice it over the next three, four, or five days, depending on how quickly your students develop mastery of it. Write the poem you are going to read on chart paper or project a digital copy of the poem. (Digital copies of the poems are provided online. See page 12 for more information.)

Why This Book? *(cont.)*

Rereading, Close Reading, and Practice *(cont.)*

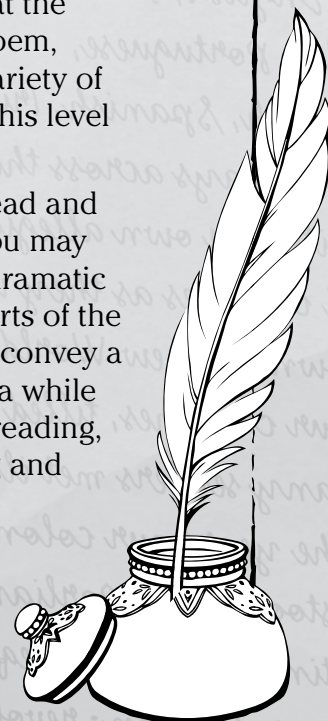
Have students read the poem several times each day. They should read it a couple times at the beginning of each day, read it several times during various breaks in the day, and read it multiple times at the end of each day. For middle school students, encourage students to practice the poem at home since they do not have much time in your class during the day.

Make two copies of the poem for each student. Have students keep one copy at school in their “fluency and poetry folders.” The other copy can be sent home for the students to practice with their families. Communicate to families the importance of children continuing to practice the poems at home with their family members.

Coaching Your Students

A key ingredient to repeated reading is the coaching that comes from a teacher. Students who hear and talk about fluent reading from and with more proficient readers develop a better understanding of fluent reading (Oczkus and Rasinski 2015). As your students practice reading the target poem each week alone, in small groups, or as an entire class, be sure to provide positive feedback about their reading. Help them develop a sense for reading the poem in such a way that it shares the meaning that the author attempts to convey or the meaning that the reader may wish to convey. Through oral interpretation of a poem, readers can express joy, sadness, anger, surprise, or any of a variety of emotions. Help students learn to use their reading to express this level of meaning.

Teachers do this by listening from time to time as students read and coaching them in the various aspects of oral interpretation. You may wish to suggest that students emphasize certain words, insert dramatic pauses, read a bit faster in one place, or slow down in other parts of the poem. And of course, lavish praise on students’ best efforts to convey a sense of meaning through their reading. Although it may take a while for the students to learn to develop this sense of voice in their reading, in the long run, it will lead to more engaged and fluent reading and higher levels of comprehension.



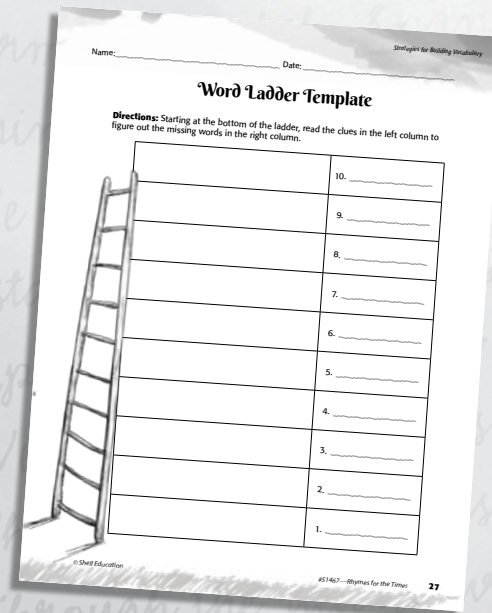
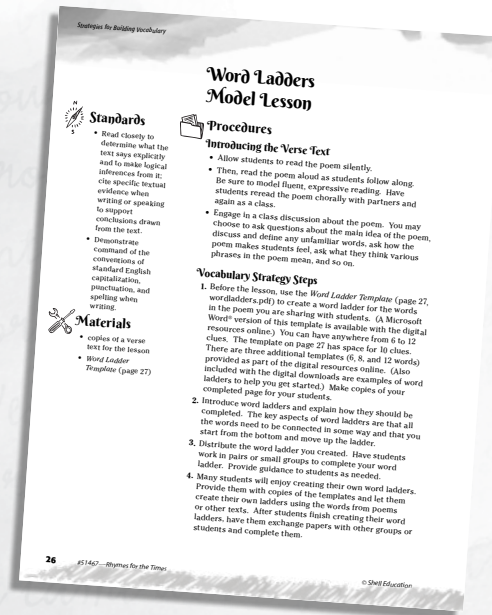
How to Use This Resource

This book is divided into two main sections. The first half of the book includes the strategy model lessons and example lessons. The second half of the book includes 60 phenomenal social studies-based poems written by David L. Harrison.

Strategy Lessons

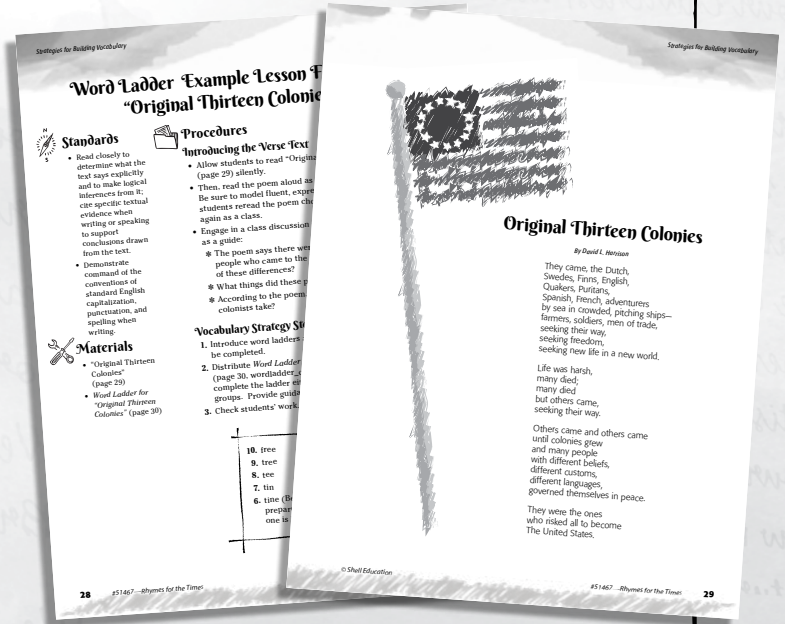
Model Lesson—Each strategy starts with a teacher lesson plan. The strategy is described with guidance for what teachers should do to prepare students for the strategy. The lesson is written to be used with any poem or other verse text of your choice.

Template—For each strategy, a template of the necessary student page is provided for your use. The templates are available as Adobe® PDFs with the digital resources online. If you would like to customize the templates to different verse texts, these pages are also provided as Microsoft Word® files and (See page 12 for more information.)

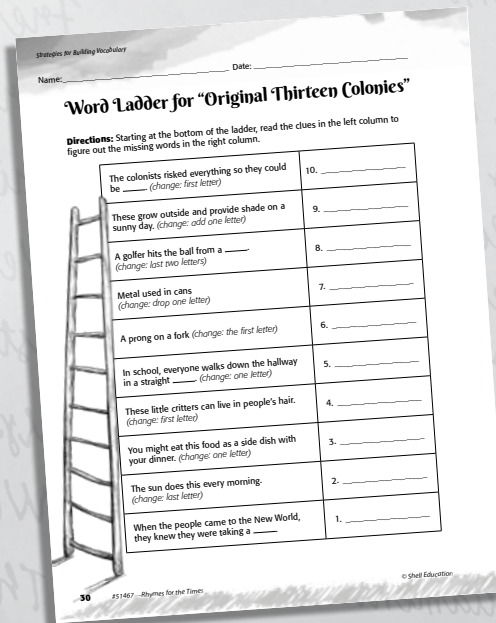


How to Use This Resource (cont.)

Example Lesson—For each strategy, there is also an example lesson featuring one of David L. Harrison’s poems from the poetry collection in this book. This allows you to see the concrete application of the abstract model lesson. You can then take this lesson and use it with one of the other poems in this collection or with poems from other poets.



Student Pages—Any needed student pages are provided for the example lesson. These are good examples for what the templates should look like after you prepare them for your students. These pages are provided as Adobe® PDFs with the Digital Resources Online. (See page 12 for more information.)



Word Ladders Model Lesson



Standards

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.



Procedures

Introducing the Verse Text

- Allow students to read the poem silently.
- Then, read the poem aloud as students follow along. Be sure to model fluent, expressive reading. Have students reread the poem chorally with partners and again as a class.
- Engage in a class discussion about the poem. You may choose to ask questions about the main idea of the poem, discuss and define any unfamiliar words, ask how the poem makes students feel, ask what they think various phrases in the poem mean, and so on.

Vocabulary Strategy Steps

1. Before the lesson, use the *Word Ladder Template* (page 27, [wordladders.pdf](#)) to create a word ladder for the words in the poem you are sharing with students. (A Microsoft Word® version of this template is available with the digital resources online.) You can have anywhere from 6 to 12 clues. The template on page 27 has space for 10 clues. There are three additional templates (6, 8, and 12 words) provided as part of the digital resources online. (Also included with the digital downloads are examples of word ladders to help you get started.) Make copies of your completed page for your students.
2. Introduce word ladders and explain how they should be completed. The key aspects of word ladders are that all the words need to be connected in some way and that you start from the bottom and move up the ladder.
3. Distribute the word ladder you created. Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete your word ladder. Provide guidance to students as needed.
4. Many students will enjoy creating their own word ladders. Provide them with copies of the templates and let them create their own ladders using the words from poems or other texts. After students finish creating their word ladders, have them exchange papers with other groups or students and complete them.



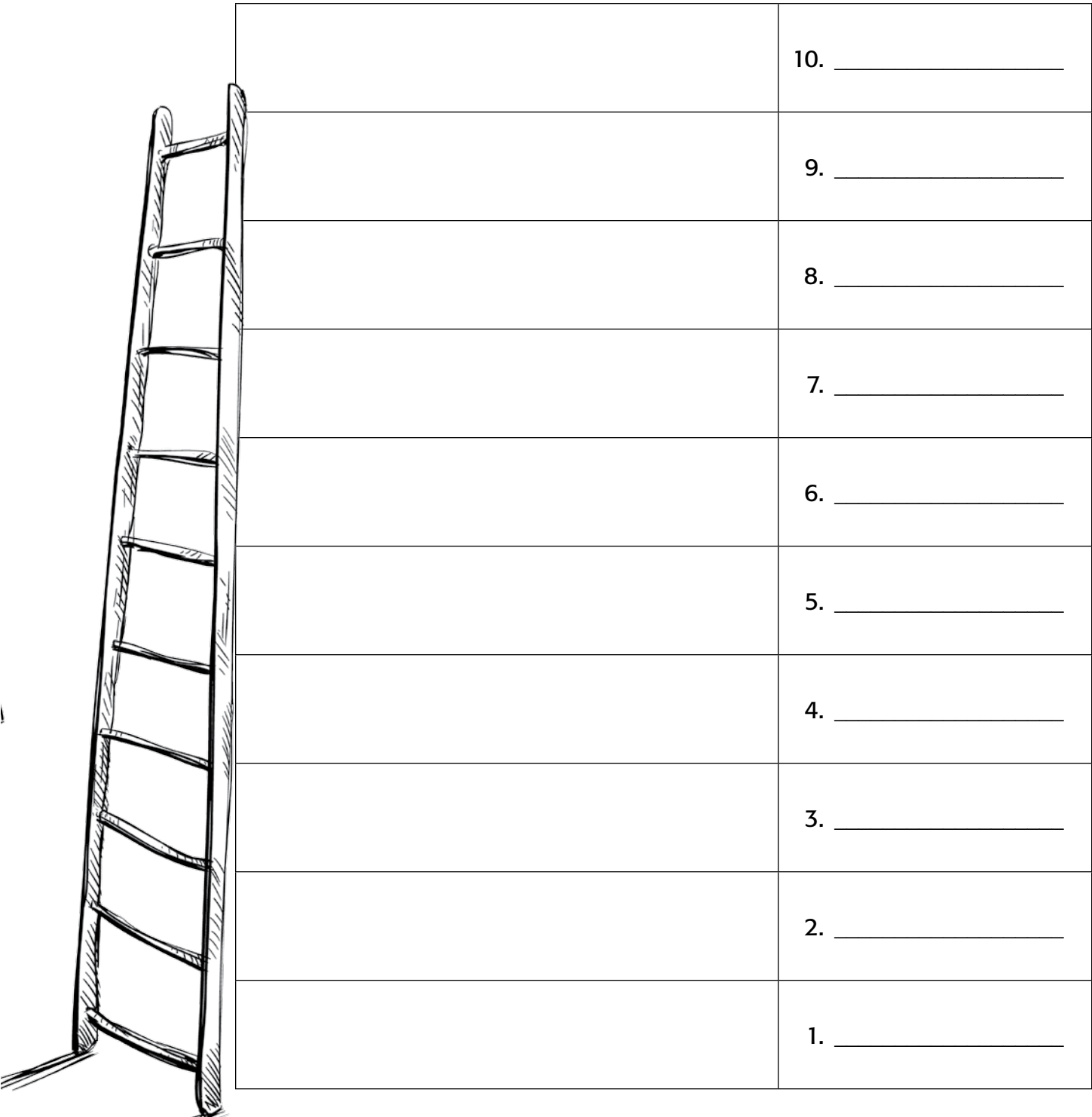
Materials

- copies of a verse text for the lesson
- *Word Ladder Template* (page 27)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Word Ladder Template

Directions: Starting at the bottom of the ladder, read the clues in the left column to figure out the missing words in the right column.



	10. _____
	9. _____
	8. _____
	7. _____
	6. _____
	5. _____
	4. _____
	3. _____
	2. _____
	1. _____

Word Ladder Example Lesson Featuring “Original Thirteen Colonies”



Standards

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.



Procedures

Introducing the Verse Text

- Allow students to read “Original Thirteen Colonies” (page 29) silently.
- Then, read the poem aloud as students follow along. Be sure to model fluent, expressive reading. Have students reread the poem chorally with partners and again as a class.
- Engage in a class discussion using the following questions as a guide:
 - * The poem says there were many differences among the people who came to the New World. What were some of these differences?
 - * What things did these people have in common?
 - * According to the poem, what kinds of risks did the colonists take?



Materials

- “Original Thirteen Colonies” (page 29)
- *Word Ladder for “Original Thirteen Colonies”* (page 30)

Vocabulary Strategy Steps

1. Introduce word ladders and explain how they should be completed.
2. Distribute *Word Ladder for “Original Thirteen Colonies”* (page 30, [wordladder_colonies.pdf](#)). Have students complete the ladder either independently or in small groups. Provide guidance to students as needed.
3. Check students’ work.

10. free	5. line
9. tree	4. lice
8. tee	3. rice
7. tin	2. rise
6. tine (Be prepared; this one is hard!)	1. risk

Memory Example Lesson featuring “The Farmer—Neolithic”



Standards

- Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.
- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.



Materials

- “The Farmer—Neolithic” (page 66)
- *Memory for “The Farmer—Neolithic”* (page 67)



Procedures

Introducing the Verse Text

- Have students read “The Farmer—Neolithic” (page 66) silently multiple times. Then, have them pair up with partners and read the poem to each other. Did they both recite it the same way with the same emphases and fluency? Or did they read it differently?
- After discussing how the students read the poem, read the poem aloud as students follow along. Be sure to model fluent, expressive reading.
- Engage in a class discussion using the following questions as a guide:
 - * What does the poem mean by “settling down”?
 - * According to the poem, what were the advantages of settling down?
 - * How did planting and harvesting change the lives of all who followed?

Word Play Strategy Steps

1. Distribute *Memory for “The Farmer—Neolithic”* (page 67, *memory_farmer.pdf*) to pairs of students. Students should cut apart the cards and arrange them facedown on a flat surface.
2. Explain how to play Memory. The first player turns over two cards and tries to make a match between a word and its definition. If a match is made, the player takes another turn. If no match is made, the player returns the cards to the original positions. Then, it is the other player’s turn.
3. Continue playing until all cards have been matched. For each pair, the player with the most matches wins.

Matches are as follows:

banding—grouping together
migrating—moving from one area to another
herds—large groups of animals kept together
spears—weapons with a pointed tip used for thrusting
fashioned—used materials to make something
brittle—hard, but breaks easily
reeds—tall, thin grasses that grow in water or marshes

The Farmer—Neolithic (10,000–2000 B.C.E.)

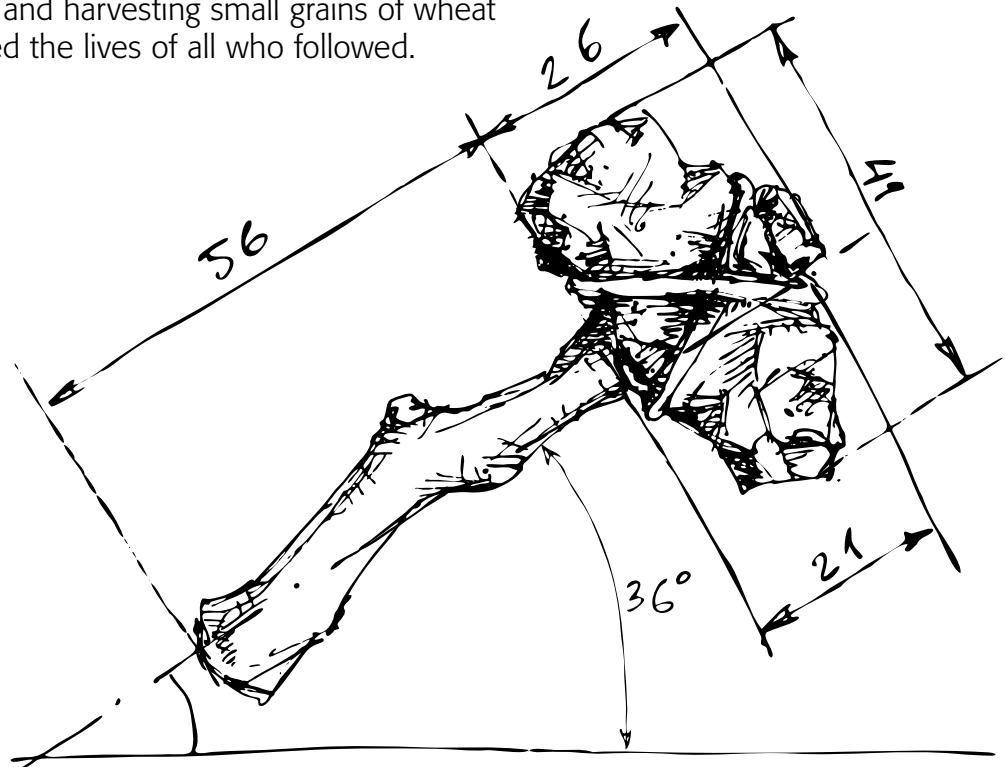
By David L. Harrison

There came a time 12,000 years ago when people started settling down, keeping dogs, raising sheep and goats, planting wheat, gathering wild crops, banding

Together in settled camps instead of following migrating herds hunting meat with spears and sharp points fashioned from brittle stone.

Farming gave them time to make pots, weave baskets from reeds, bark, leather, improve clothing, invent tools, art.

There came a time 12,000 years ago when planting and harvesting small grains of wheat forever changed the lives of all who followed.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Memory for “The Farmer—Neolithic”

Directions: Cut apart the cards to play Memory with a partner.

banding

grouping together

migrating

moving from one area to another

herds

large groups of animals kept together

spears

weapons with a pointed tip used
for thrusting

fashioned

used materials to make something

brittle

hard, but breaks easily

reeds

tall, thin grasses that grow in
water or marshes

Background Information on the Poems *(cont.)*

Poem	Background Information
<p>If This Temple Could Talk—Mayans (2000 B.C.E.)</p>	<p>During the Mayan empire, two types of pyramids were built. Both were built for the gods, but one had a temple on top so the priest could climb to the highest point to offer sacrifices. The other pyramid was a sacred gift to the gods and was too steep to climb. Today, some of the pyramids and temples have been restored and are accessible for tourists to visit. Others are covered in wild, overgrown jungles.</p>
<p>Biblical—Israelites (1500 B.C.E.)</p>	<p>According to the Bible, God promised Abraham he would be a father of many nations. His grandson, Jacob (who was later known as Israel), had 12 sons who founded the 12 tribes of Israel. The Israelites are said to be God’s chosen people, and they experienced periods of both blessing and discipline.</p>
<p>Archaeology—Israelites (1500 B.C.E.)</p>	<p>The Bible chronicles the story of the Israelites from their beginnings as sons of Jacob to their enslavement in Egypt to their eventual pilgrimage ending in the promised land. Archaeologists from both biblical and secular mindsets continue to learn more about the tribe’s past.</p>
<p>Oracle Bones from the Shang Dynasty—Ancient China (1200 B.C.E.)</p>	<p>Oracle bones were used by the ancient Chinese to tell the future. Priests would write questions to the ancestors using oxen shoulder bones or turtle shells. When heated, the bones would crack and priests would “read” the cracks to find answers about future events.</p>
<p>The Olympics Begin—Greece (776 B.C.E.)</p>	<p>The ancient Olympics were held every four years from around 776 B.C.E. until 393 C.E. Running races were the only events for the first several games, but slowly, other events were introduced. A one-month truce was called across Greece during the Olympics because there was usually war going on, and thousands of people came to Olympia to watch. The modern games were introduced in 1896.</p>

Background Information on the Poems *(cont.)*

Poem	Background Information
Athens—Greece (479–323 B.C.E.)	Athens is named for Athena, the Greek goddess of war and wisdom. It is one of the oldest cities in the world. It has been a continuous home for people for over 3000 years. There was no king in Athens; the Greeks invented democracy. They also built elaborate temples such as the Parthenon, which still stands today.
School—Rome (300 B.C.E.)	During the Roman Republic, children were often taught at home. This informal education included basic reading and writing. As the republic grew into the Roman Empire, the Romans began modeling their education after the Greeks. Tuition-based schools were started, and Greek teachers and tutors were often employed.
Terra-cotta Army— China (250 B.C.E.)	China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang Di, commissioned the creation of what is now known as the "Terra-cotta Army." The army consists of thousands of soldiers and horses made from clay. The bodies seem to be made in an assembly-line fashion, but the faces are unique. Many of the soldiers hold real weapons, and it is thought the emperor wanted their protection in the afterlife.
Julius Caesar—Rome (46–44 B.C.E.)	Born in July 100 B.C.E. in the Roman Republic, Julius Caesar grew up to be considered one of the greatest military minds of all time. Under his reign, Rome grew to be a mighty empire. He declared himself the dictator of the Roman Empire for life and began making many positive changes. He also made many enemies and was assassinated in 44 B.C.E.
The Colosseum— Rome (80 C.E.)	The Colosseum was built in less than 10 years and opened to the public in 80 C.E. with 100 days of games. Admission was free, and the Colosseum could seat 50,000 people. The structure was used for over 400 years for such events as gladiator fights, wild-animal displays, religious ceremonies, and executions. It is estimated that over half a million people and one million animals lost their lives in the Colosseum.