

WINTER THEMED READING PASSAGES

Includes 6 fun and engaging reading passages & a variety of reading response activities!

The Shortest Day

The stars are full of information! Humans have studied the stars and planets for many years. We even use events happening in the sky to mark time, like seasons. The winter solstice is an astronomical event marking the first day of winter.

For people living in the Northern Hemisphere - areas above the Equator - the winter solstice occurs on December 21st or 22nd. What happens on the winter solstice? It marks the moment when half of Earth is tilted farthest away from the sun. This angle results in less sunlight reaching Earth; therefore, we refer to it as the shortest day of the year. Every day following the winter solstice begins to get longer - meaning we have daylight longer. Anybody living below the Equator experiences winter solstice in June!

A SEASON OR A SOLSTICE?

The winter solstice is the astronomical first day of winter. Astronomical means relating to astronomy. But there is also a meteorological first day of the **winter season**. Meteorological means relating to the branch of science associated with the processes of the atmosphere, like weather!

These days are different. Winter solstice is marked by the tilt of the Earth and happens every year in December. Meteorologists determine the first day of **winter season** based on temperature records. A meteorologist studies the weather and climate. Weather temperatures and patterns mark a season. In the United States, most areas refer to winter from the months of December to March.

A myth associated with the winter solstice is that it is the coldest day of the year. Although it could be possible for the record cold temperatures to occur in December, overall, January tends to have the coldest temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere.

SEEING A SOLSTICE.

Much like we see a change in seasons, there is a way to see the winter solstice. Sort of. If you were to stand outside at noon on the day of the winter solstice, your shadow would appear longer than usual. Why?

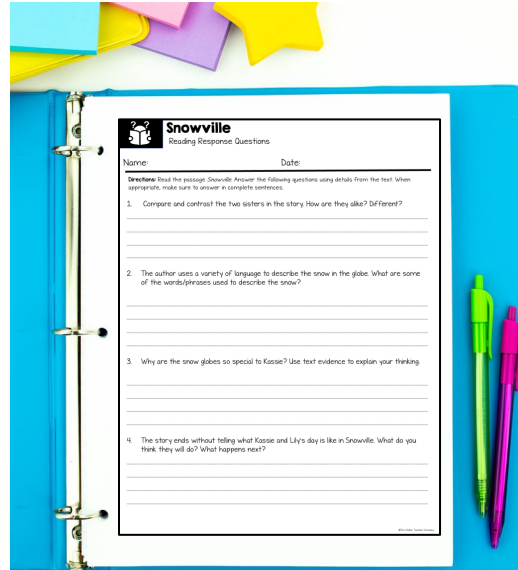
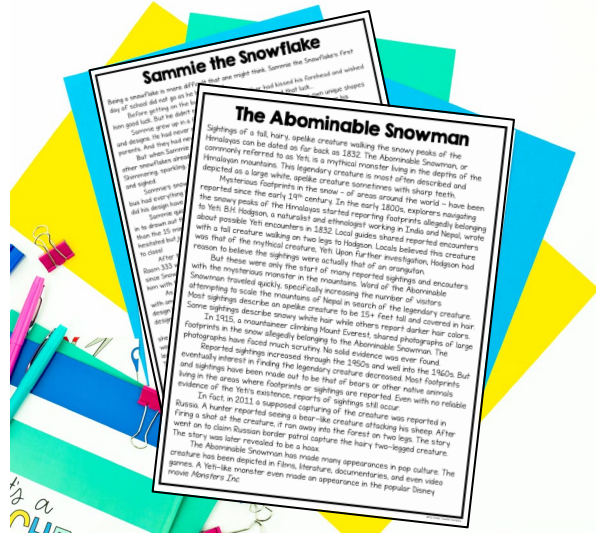
Well, let's break it down. Every day the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. The sun follows an imaginary arc through the sky. The height of the arc changes throughout the Earth's orbit around the sun.

Also, as the Earth orbits, its tilt changes. In winter in the Northern Hemisphere, the Earth's North Pole is tilted away from the sun making the height of the arc low. This results in a shadow that looks longer than other times of the year!

In Latin, the word solstice translates to "sun stands still." During the winter solstice, the sun is so low it looks as if it is rising and setting in the same place - as if it is *standing still*!

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

This resource includes 6 reading passages, text-based comprehension questions for each passage, a skill-based graphic organizer for each passage, AND a variety of reading response activities.



Genres Included:

- Informational
- Fantasy
- Myth/Legend
- Realistic Fiction
- Biography
- Fiction

Each passage includes a response sheet with four text-based comprehension questions.

Each passage includes a graphic organizer to focus on a specific skill:

- Close Reading
- Character Traits
- Synthesize
- Making Inferences
- Sequence
- Types of Conflict

* Digital versions are included for all templates.*

IN ADDITION...

Each graphic organizer also includes a generic template that students can apply to their independent reading text. So after they have fun using that skill with the holiday passages, they can continue to practice that skill in their own texts.

This is what it could look like in your classroom:

- **Step 1:** Students read winter-themed reading passage.
- **Step 2:** Students answer comprehension questions.
- **Step 3:** Students use graphic organizer to organize their thinking about the winter-themed passage.
- **Step 4:** Students use the generic graphic organizer to help transfer that skill to their independent reading.



Making Inferences

Independent Reading

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: As you are reading, use the space below to make two strong inferences. Jot down some important text clues, and your own personal connection. Use both of those notes to help you make an inference about the text. Remember, an inference is when you think about what the author wants you to know, but doesn't directly tell you.

Inference #1

Text Clues	My Personal Connection
My Inference: So I think... 	

Inference #2

Text Clues	My Personal Connection
My Inference: So I think... 	

THERE'S MORE...

In addition to the reading passages, comp questions, and graphic organizers there are also a variety of fun and engaging student response activities to help your students extend their thinking and get creative with how they respond to the text.



My Winter Comic

Can You Guess My Genre?

The Shortest Day

Snowville

The Abominable Snowman

Additional Response Activities:

- Guess My Genre
- Winter Writing Fun
- Design a Book Cover
- My Winter Comic
- Social Media Profile

Students will have so much fun with the passages and activities in this resource, it won't even feel like work to them.

Includes Digital Versions

I love to provide both print and digital options in my resources. This resource includes a digital version created using Google Slides.

In addition to the print version, you get the reading passages and ALL response templates available in Google Slides (text boxes already added).

Rest assured, you can use this resource in both face-to-face and virtual classrooms.

Synthesize
Passage: *The Abominable Snowman*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read the passage *The Abominable Snowman*. Then use the space below to practice synthesizing the information you have learned. Think about what you already knew about the topic, what you learned, and how your thinking changed about the topic as you were reading. Jot down a few notes in each section.

WHAT I THINK I KNOW ABOUT THE TEXT....

HOW MY THINKING CHANGED AFTER READING

WHAT I LEARNED WHILE I WAS READING

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A LOOK INSIDE...

The Winter Games

If you live on Snowmass Lane, you better be prepared to participate in The Winter Games! Every year we organize a two-day competition full of winter sports and activities. Our neighborhood takes winter seriously!

According to my uncle, The Winter Games started when he was a kid. One neighbor built a snowman, then another, then another... And pretty soon they were all competing to see who could build the most elaborate snowman! As the years went on more and more activities were added to the competition. Now, The Winter Games takes place over the first weekend we get a big snow!

Snowman building is a classic competition. We also have competitions for ice cream making, sledding, snow art, and ice hockey. The ice cream making competition is probably the most difficult. Competitors can only use snow found in their yard and ingredients they already have in their kitchen! My favorite event is the snow art competition. We make intricate designs with our feet in the snow. Last year, I got second place for a very detailed mandala I created in our backyard! You had to stand high up on our deck to see the lace-like designs. I incorporated hearts, diamonds, and circles. This year I know I am going to win!

My grandma dominates the sledding race. You are probably thinking, yeah right, a grandma wins the race! But she does. She built her sled when she was a kid and has raced with it ever since. It is made from cedar that her dad chopped down in the Evergreen Forest that backs up to Snowmass Lane. It puts all the other plastic sleds to shame! The sled race takes place at Icicle Park. There is a hill that has the best slope you've ever seen! One day I hope I can compete as well as she does.

The ice hockey tournament is our newest event. Of course, it can only take place once Frostbite Pond has completely frozen over. Some years, the tournament takes

place a couple weeks later than others. I organized the tournament last year and thought it would be fun to compete in a more athletic

At the end of all the winners. A winner for a trophy! There is also an award for the year. Last year it was their garage door and left

This year I have a December 1st, but I have now!



The Winter Games

Reading Response Questions

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Read the passage *The Winter Games*. Answer the following questions using details from the text. When appropriate, make sure to answer in complete sentences.

1. According to the narrator's uncle, how did The Winter Games on Snowmass Lane begin?

2. What other snowy competitions could the people on Snowmass Lane add to The Winter Games? Share your ideas!

3. Describe the narrator's winning snow art design.



Making Inferences

Passage: The Winter Games

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Read the passage *The Winter Games*. Use the text clues listed below and your own personal experiences to make inferences about the text. Remember, an inference is when you think about what the author wants you to know but doesn't directly tell you.

Inference #1

Text Clues

My favorite is the snow art competition. We make intricate designs with our feet in the snow. Last year, I got second place for a very detailed mandala I created in our backyard!

My Personal Connection

My Inference: So I think...

Inference #2

Text Clues

My brother is the one who organized the

My Personal Connection

The Abominable Snowman

Sightings of a tall, hairy, apelike creature walking the snowy peaks of the Himalayas can be dated as far back as 1832. The Abominable Snowman, or commonly referred to as Yeti, is a mythical monster living in the depths of the Himalayan mountains. This legendary creature is most often described and depicted as a large white, apelike creature sometimes with sharp teeth.

Mysterious footprints in the snow – of areas around the world – have been reported since the early 19th century. In the early 1800s, explorers navigating the snowy peaks of the Himalayas started reporting footprints allegedly belonging to Yeti. B.H. Hodgson, a naturalist and ethnologist working in India and Nepal, wrote about possible Yeti encounters in 1832. Local guides shared reported encounters with a tall creature walking on two legs to Hodgson. Locals believed this creature was that of the mythical creature, Yeti. Upon further investigation, Hodgson had reason to believe the sightings were actually that of an orangutan.

But these were only the start of many reported sightings and encounters with the mysterious monster in the mountains. Word of the Abominable Snowman traveled quickly, specifically increasing the number of visitors attempting to scale the mountains of Nepal in search of the legendary creature. Most sightings describe an apelike creature to be 15+ feet tall and covered in hair. Some sightings describe snowy white hair while others report darker hair colors.

In 1915, a mountaineer climbing Mount Everest, shared photographs of large footprints in the snow allegedly belonging to the Abominable Snowman. The photographs have faced much scrutiny. No solid evidence was ever found.

Reported sightings increased through the 1950s and well into the 1960s. But eventually interest in finding the legendary creature decreased. Most footprints and sightings have been made out to be that of bears or other native animals living in the areas where footprints or sightings are reported. Even with no reliable evidence of the Yeti's existence, reports of sightings still occur.

In fact, in 2011 a supposed capturing of the creature was reported in Russia. A hunter reported seeing a bear-like creature attacking his sheep. After firing a shot at the creature, it ran away into the forest on two legs. The story went on to claim Russian border patrol capture the hairy two-legged creature. The story was later revealed to be a hoax.

The Abominable Snowman has made many appearances in pop culture. The creature has been depicted in films, literature, documentaries, and even video games. A Yeti-like monster even made an appearance in the popular Disney movie *Monsters Inc.*



The Abominable Snowman

Reading Response Questions

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Read the passage *The Abominable Snowman*. Answer the following questions using details from the text. When appropriate, make sure to answer in complete sentences.

1. Many Yeti sightings have been reported. According to the passage, what are some of the features used to describe the legendary Abominable Snowman?

2. Why do you think interest in finding the Abominable Snowman eventually decreased?

3. The author wrote... *In 1915, a mountaineer climbing Mount Everest, shared photographs of large footprints in the snow allegedly belonging to the Abominable Snowman. The photographs have faced much scrutiny.* What do you think the word *scrutiny* means?

4. Do you think the Yeti exists? Explain your thinking!



Synthesize

Passage: The Abominable Snowman

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Read the passage *The Abominable Snowman*. Then use the space below to practice synthesizing the information you have learned. Think about what you already knew about the topic, what you learned, and how your thinking changed about the topic as you were reading. Jot down a few notes in each section.

WHAT I THINK I KNOW ABOUT THE TEXT...



HOW MY THINKING CHANGED AFTER READING

WHAT I LEARNED WHILE I WAS READING



A LOOK INSIDE...

Can You Guess My Genre?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Each of these reading passages is about Winter, but each one is written in a different genre. Can you identify the genre of each reading passage? Read each passage listed below. Name the genre of that passage. Then list out 2-3 attributes/clues that helped you identify the passage.

The Shortest Day

I think the genre is: _____ I think this because: _____

Snowville

I think the genre is: _____ I think this because: _____

Can You Guess My Genre?

The Winter Games

I think the genre is: _____ I think this because: _____

7 Peaks on 7 Continents

I think the genre is: _____ I think this because: _____

Sammie the Snowflake

I think the genre is: _____ I think this because: _____

Winter Writing Fun

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Each of these reading passages is Winter themed, but each one is written in a different genre. Your task is to write another passage that could be added to this Winter Anthology. Select the genre from the box below for your writing. Then spend some time writing down the attributes of that genre (be sure to use this to inform your writing). Use the box at the bottom to brainstorm ideas for your text. Then when you're ready, use the space on the back to write your Winter-themed piece.

The genre of my writing piece will be:

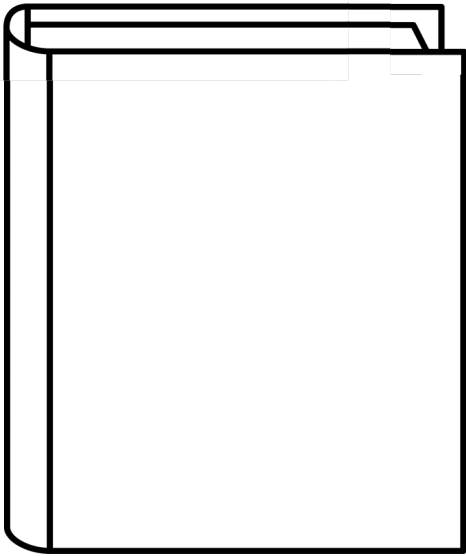
<input type="checkbox"/> Adventure	<input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy	<input type="checkbox"/> Memoir
<input type="checkbox"/> Biography	<input type="checkbox"/> Folktale	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Fiction
<input type="checkbox"/> Drama	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Science Fiction
<input type="checkbox"/> Fable	<input type="checkbox"/> Humor	<input type="checkbox"/> Tall Tale

Attributes and characteristics of that genre:

Design a Book Cover

Name: _____ Date: _____

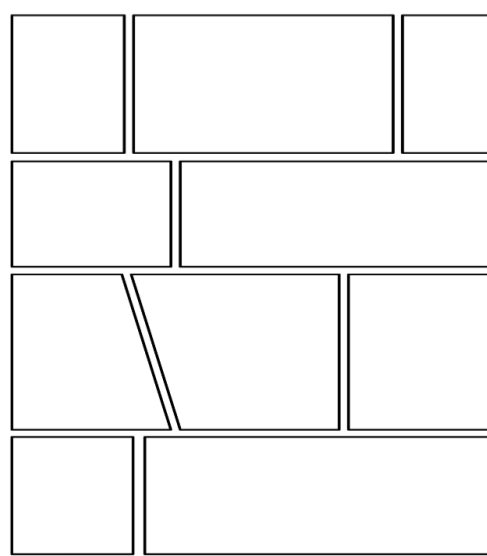
Directions: Pick your favorite passage and design a book cover for that specific passage. Think about the genre of the text, the author's purpose, and some of the key details in the text. Make sure your cover design is reflective of what you know about the genre and text.



My Winter Comic

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use one of the passages that you read to help you create a Winter-themed comic. Maybe you turn that text into a comic, or maybe you use the information you learned in one of the Winter passages to come up with your own original comic. Just make sure you include both images and speech bubbles.



Create A Social Media Profile

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Pick one of the characters from the passages you read. Think about what you learned about that character from the story. Use that information to help you create a social media profile for that character.

@ _____

profile picture

My Profile

Name: _____

Interests: _____

Friends: _____

What's on your mind? _____

My Recent Posts

