**Characteristics of the Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Historical fiction</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>Third-person narrative organized in six short chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each chapter heading describes a stage in the characters’ journey.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Westward migration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moving and starting a new life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facing challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes and Ideas</td>
<td>Families in the 1800s faced dangers that we no longer face today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes it is necessary to take risks in order to achieve a better life.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is important to not give up when facing difficulties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and Literary Features</td>
<td>A mix of descriptive and expository language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Details about historical settings, characters, and their possessions help the reader to connect with the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sentence Complexity</td>
<td>A mix of short and complex sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogue in quotation marks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transitions indicate sequencing and cause and effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Words related to wagons and to 1800s travel: oxen, yoke, prairie schooner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Multisyllable words: reputation, escorted, churning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>Realistic illustrations on most pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book and Print Features</td>
<td>Thirteen pages of text</td>
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Perilous Passage by Barbara Tillman

Build Background
Help students use their knowledge about taking a trip to visualize the story. Build interest by asking a question such as the following: Have you ever moved or taken a long trip? What happened? Read the title, author, and illustrator, and talk about the cover illustration of covered wagons around a campfire. Tell students that this story is historical fiction in which the author has set the characters and events in the 1800s. Explain that real people once took dangerous trips along the Oregon Trail, just as the family in the story does.

Introduce the Text
Guide students through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

Page 2: Explain that this is a story about the Ambrose family. The Ambrose family sets out on a journey to start a better life in a new home. Suggested language: Notice how the Ambrose family is dressed and the supplies shown with them. The heading says they are going to start a new life. Why do you think the title of the book is Perilous Passage? What kind of things do you think might happen in the story?

Page 3: Have students find the word deserve and read aloud the sentence where it appears. Ask: Why do children deserve to have a secure future?

Page 13: Draw attention to the chapter heading as well as the illustration. Something scary is happening here! How do you think the man came to be in the water? Now turn back to the beginning of the story and read to find out what happens to the Ambrose family on their perilous passage.

Target Vocabulary
churning – stirred up and moving with great force, p. 12
defended – protected from physical or verbal attack, p. 12
deserve – to have a right to or to have earned, p. 3
escorted – gone with a person as a guide or protector, p. 10
relied – depended on someone to do something, p. 3
satisfied – happy with things that have happened or the work that has been done, p. 10
situation – what is happening at a specific time or place, p. 14
swelled – grown larger than usual, p. 5
worthy – having value, p. 11
Read
Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their understanding of the text as needed.

Remind students to use the Monitor/Clarify Strategy by noticing what is confusing as they read, and then finding ways to understand it.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response
Invite students to share their personal responses to the story.

Suggested language: Have you ever had to face a scary situation? How did William feel when he had to steer the wagon across the river?

Ways of Thinking
As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The Ambrose family sets out for Oregon to start a new life.</td>
<td>• Life was very different in the 1800s.</td>
<td>• The author tells about what William and his parents are thinking and feeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The journey is long, and the family walks alongside a wagon loaded with their supplies.</td>
<td>• Moving was much harder before there were cars and trucks.</td>
<td>• The story includes lots of details that tell what life was like during the Ambrose family’s time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ten-year-old William Ambrose saves the family in a moment of danger.</td>
<td>• If you must face a scary and dangerous situation, you can be strong and stay safe.</td>
<td>• The pictures show what the Ambrose family sees on their journey.</td>
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Choices for Further Support
• Fluency Invite students to choose a chapter to read aloud chorally, with individual students taking solos to read dialogue. Remind them to think about the different ways that description and dialogue may be said to best interpret the text.

• Comprehension Based on your observations of the students’ reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.

• Phonics/Word Work Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind students that suffixes such as -ed and -ing change verbs and nouns for different functions. Churning takes the verb churn and makes it an adverb. Relied is the past tense form of rely.
Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 16.8.

Responding
Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their Reader’s Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Compare and Contrast
Remind students that they can compare characters by looking for parts of the story in which the characters act the same. They can contrast characters by looking for parts where the characters respond to a situation differently.

Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below:

Think Aloud

All of the children are sad to be moving to Oregon. That’s something they all have in common. William’s brother and sisters are too young to help their parents. That’s a way they’re different from William. William is the oldest, and he does help his parents, so that makes him different than his siblings.

Practice the Skill
Encourage students to share their examples of another story in which one character is like another character in some ways and different in other ways.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text
Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

Assessment Prompts
• What can readers tell from reading this story about pioneer life at the time of the Ambrose family’s journey?
• Which words on page 11 help the reader understand how William feels about learning to drive the wagon?
• What will most likely happen to the Ambrose family?
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions. Possible responses shown.

1. Think within the text: Why does the Ambrose family choose to make such a long and difficult journey to Oregon?
   - They hope life in Oregon will be better for them.

2. Think within the text: Why is it important to William's father that everyone has good shoes?
   - It is more important to keep shoes dry and warm in the cold Oregon climate.

3. Think beyond the text: William has responsibilities to help his family. How does this compare to the responsibilities of children today?
   - Most kids have to go to school instead of working at home as much as William does. Pioneer kids probably had more responsibilities to help their families and less time to play.

4. Think about the text: Why do you think the author chose the word “Panic” on page 13 of the story?
   - “Panic” describes the panic William must feel when his father is swept away by the current.

5. Make Connections: Have you or someone in your family ever had to give up something you treasured in order to get something else you needed more? Write about your experience.
   - Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.
Perilous Passage

Thinking Beyond the Text

Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in two or three paragraphs.

Remember that when you think beyond the text, you use your personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

On page 3, the author states that “Mrs. Ambrose knew the trip would be long and difficult.” Why then was she determined to make the trip? Do you think the family made the right decision? Why or why not? Explain your answer, giving examples from the story.

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Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. **Think within the text**  Why does the Ambrose family choose to make such a long and difficult journey to Oregon?

2. **Think within the text**  Why is it important to William’s father that everyone has good shoes?

3. **Think beyond the text**  William has responsibilities to help his family. How do the responsibilities of children today compare to those of pioneer children in William’s time?

4. **Think about the text**  Why do you think the author chose the subhead “Panic” on page 13 of the story?

Making Connections  Have you or someone in your family ever had to give up something you treasured in order to get something else you needed more? Write about your experience.

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.
Perilous Passage • LEVEL S

In a matter of hours, the train of wagons was ready to set out on the Oregon Trail. Spirits were high. Children laughed and skipped as they walked along.

Mrs. Ambrose escorted her children as they walked, warning them about the enormous wagon wheels that could crush them in seconds. She had heard stories of terrible accidents that had claimed the lives of women and children.

Mr. Ambrose drove the wagon, making sure the yoke on the oxen was well-placed and in good condition. He knew how important it was to take good care of his animals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read word correctly</td>
<td>✓ cat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated word, sentence, or phrase</td>
<td>⊗ cat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accuracy Rate

Total Self-Corrections

Comments: