Fluency can be practiced only when the words are familiar to children and reading level is not too difficult. For this reason as well as for comprehension practice, first graders should read each story at least twice. The first semester this means reading it first with the teacher, and then reading the same story silently or in pairs. Later in the year it may mean reading it the first time either in pairs or silently and the second time aloud as a class to the teacher.

**Vocabulary Words**

* Include some vocabulary words, but the focus in first grade (especially the first semester) is more on learning to read familiar words than on enlarging their vocabulary! Vocabulary growth will come more from story time and explanations given when introducing the story than specific practice on big words.

**Further guidelines**

* When first grade students are ready to begin reading in pairs (often around November or December), the teacher assigns reading pairs along with each pair's specific reading spot. Groups of two work better than three. After teacher introduces the story/chapter (and vocabulary word if applicable) for the day, these small groups read the story together. Teacher may want to change the groups after each book (approximately every three weeks).
	+ Students need to be trained to use their time wisely when out of the sight of the teacher. At the beginning and periodically afterwards ask students to report back to the teacher (they come with their partner) and give a thumbs up, sideways or down signal to indicate how trustworthy/responsible they were in their reading together time. No words needed—unless they didn't do well. When held accountable like this, students tend to be harder on themselves than the teacher.
* Each child needs a 1” three ring binder to store their graphic visuals
* Reading class time is spent only on reading projects. Early finishers should simply read a library book—or look at it rather than expect other free time
* Once a week evaluate each student's general reading. Use E, S+, S, S-, N as the grading scale. Think about general fluency (smoothness and accuracy), speed, and expression. I prefer the once-a-week overall approach rather than the “Today I will grade them on this one page” approach. It is less pressure for both me and them, and I think perhaps more accurate in grading overall performance.
* On the days a regular visual or comprehension tool is used, you don't need to ask the ABeka questions at the end of the story.
* Initially first graders seem to do best with a round robin approach in reading. When they begin reading, go with sentences. Only once they can read more quickly should you go with reading by paragraphs. Later in the year teacher may want to vary the method of doing reading class using approaches such as grasshopper jump, eagle eyes, read for 45 sec, etc. For further variety, the teacher may occasionally read portions, making small reading mistakes while the students follow along and catch her. To involve everyone you could say on this page only the boys/girls may correct me or only those on this bench, etc.
* From the beginning train students to pay attention and follow along when classmates are reading. Occasionally allow classmates to help with a word the reading child is stumbling over.

**Kitten in the Well**

**Overview:** this book, set in a cross-cultural setting, opens the door for many discussions concerning a different land, people, climate, and life style than North American students are accustomed to. Capitalize on that. Be sure to spend time looking at the pictures. They tell so much about this cross-cultural setting.

**Vocabulary words:** Begin almost daily vocabulary words. The \*ed ones are recommended ones to use.

**Time:** read this book sometime around the end of third quarter and beginning of fourth quarter

**Ideas to enhance this book**

* Buy a pineapple to eat together as you talk about “Life in Paraguay”
* Ask someone who has lived in Paraguay to come talk, show pictures, and objects

**Table of Contents:** (suggested daily amounts)

| **Day** | **Pages to read** | **Vocabulary Word** | **Visual/Comprehension tools** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| One | * Front and back covers
* Inside of cover map
* Dedication page
* Note to boys and girls
* Table of Contents
 |  | * Book overview visual
* Map of Paraguay
 |
| Two | p. 11-31 (21 pages) | * Flicker \* (p. 27)
* scampers (p. 29)
 | * Begin “Life in Paraguay” bubble map (small one)
* Bring lamp to demonstrate shadows
 |
| Three  | p. 32-47 (16 pages) | * whimpers (p. 41)
* persistent \* (p. 44)
* nook (p. 46)
 | * Visual of “step-in” words describing Snowball's actions
 |
| Four | p. 48-61 (14 pages) | * Sails \*(p. 51) – multiple meanings
 | * Visual on Main Idea: Mae likes her kitten Satin
* Eat a pineapple
 |
| Five | p. 62-78 (17 pages) | * Tilts \* (p. 65)
* clamps (p. 66)
* slings (p. 66)
 | * Add to list of “Life in Paraguay” then everyone help make a large class bubble map of “Life in Paraguay” to hang on wall
 |
| Six | p. 79-95 (17 pages) | * Learn several Spanish

 words (p. 90) | * Add a couple more to list of “Life in Paraguay
 |
| Seven  | p. 96-109 (14 pages) | * Windlass \* (p. 102)
 | * Teacher draws and explains water table, how wells are dug to tap into underground water, and how it is piped into our houses. Students then also draw a picture of it.
 |
| Eight | p. 110-127 (18 pages) |  | * Class three-point summary of the first chapter (p.110-122)
 |
| Nine | p. 128-143 (16 pages) | * hark (p. 131)
* rut \* (p. 134)
 | * Talk about “step-in” words that describe the busAdd to “Life in Paraguay” poster
 |
| Ten | p. 144-157 (14 pages) | * Chugs \* (p. 146)
 | * Talk about “step-in” words that describe the creative man's actions—and the driver's response
* Cause and effect visual (p. 148-150)
 |
| Eleven | p. 158-173 (16 pages) | * Pell-mell \* (p. 155)
 | * A lot more on “Life in Paraguay”. Keep adding to the class poster as appropriate
 |
| Twelve | 174-189 (16 pages) |  | * Make a motto of “It is more blessed to give than to receive”
 |
| Thirteen  | 190-212 (23 pages—this is long) |  | * Length of pages will leave little time for a graphic visual
 |
| Fourteen  | 213-227 (15 pages) | * yanks (p. 217)
* bellow \* (p. 218)
 | * Make a divider for three-ring binder
 |
| Fifteen | 228-240 (13 pages) |  | * Allow children to choose and read a favorite page
 |

**Kitten in the Well**

| **Chapter/Visuals/Vocabulary** | **Comprehension Discussion** |
| --- | --- |
| **Day one*** Visuals
	+ Book overview visual
	+ Map of Paraguay (front of book copy)
		- walk through school and find Paraguay on all school maps
		- note land is close to equator
		- mark Kansas, Mexico, Andes Mountains
		- note distance from PA to KS versus to Paraguay
* Look at and read
	+ front and back covers
	+ inside of cover map
	+ dedication page
	+ note to boys and girls
	+ Table of Contents—talk about what they can know just by looking at the titles
 | Mae is a young girl who lived in PA but moved to Paraguay with her family.* What kinds of adjustments might she have had? What might she have missed?
* Think about
	+ people (include friends, cousins, aunts, uncles . . . )
	+ house and other buildings (favorite nooks in the house, secret hide outs in the barn . . .)
	+ language—official language in Paraguay is Spanish
	+ food
	+ land—what would you miss in KS? sunsets, wheat fields, wide open space, big blue skies, wind . . .
	+ stores and other places—favorite eating place, zoo, Carey Park
	+ pets
 |
| **MAE** |
| **Chapter One p. 11-22** (12 p.) About Mae* Learn about Mae's family: parents and big sister
* Visual
	+ Color the Paraguay map from day one
	+ begin listing “Life in Paraguay” comments to later write onto the big wall visual
 | What is the problem in this chapter? (Mae has a big empty spot inside.) The book talks only about the hole left by no cat. Would other things also make the hole bigger?* Note things about Paraguay (begin a large bubble map with smaller circle. Individuals write those smaller circles. Title: “Life in Paraguay”)
	+ Papaya tree in picture
	+ Sun shines hot
	+ Trees grow tall (close together and more rain)
	+ Parrots flying over the house
	+ Monkeys playing in nearby coconut tree
	+ pineapple plants and banana trees (in picture)
	+ lots of plants; some with huge leaves
	+ different trees
 |
| **Chapter Two p. 23-31** (9 p.) A Cat for Mae* What can you know just by reading the title?
* Vocabulary words:
* flicker (p. 27) *to move irregularly or unsteadily*
* scampers (p. 29) *to run nimbly and usually playfully about*
* Visual
	+ could write vocabulary words on index cards and illustrate
 | In this chapter you will learn a lot about how Mae and her family live. Read to see* What transportation they use
* Do they have electricity?
* A bit about the kind of house they have (it has an upstairs)

Bring a lamp to demonstrate what makes shadows (p. 29) |
| **SNOWBALL**  |
| **Chapter Three p. 32-47** (16 p.) Snowball Hunts a Nest* Visual
	+ List of “step-in words” (on pages 34, 35, 37, and 41) that describe things Snowball does
* Vocabulary
* whimpers (p. 41) *a low whining*
	+ persistent (p. 44) *determined*
	+ nook (p. 46) *a small secluded corner or small area*
 | *Ask students to find as many of these words as they can and write them on a visual during their reading in partners time.*In this chapter you will read lots of “step-in words” (word that make you feel like you are stepping into the story) that describe things Snowball does:* jumps, marches (p. 34)
* snoops, stands, drinks (p. 35)
* leaps, dumps, spills, darts (p. 37)
* runs, hides, whimpers, leaps (p. 41)
* runs, climbs, snoops, whimpers, leaps, runs, jumps, whimpers ( p. 43)

Why is Snowball acting so strangely? |
| **Chapter Four p. 48-56** (9 p.) Snowball's Surprise* Visual
	+ Divider for the book
* Vocabulary
	+ sails (p. 51)--note multiple meanings
 | * In this chapter you learn more about life for Mae and her family in Paraguay
	+ Note the bananas hanging in the house to ripen
	+ Father is chopping wood—not to heat the house (this is summer—yet they do have a fireplace) but for the cook stove
 |
| **SATIN** |
| **Chapter Five p. 57-61** (5 p.) Satin Plays Doll* Visual
	+ Main idea
	+ Do it as a class one on the board; one child copy for the rest, then make copies
 | Find Farmer Ray's house on the map (p. 58 talks about Farmer Ray)The main idea of this chapter is that Mae likes her kitten Satin. She* holds them on her lap (p. 57)
* calls them sweet darling kittens (p. 57)
* they are special friends (p. 58)
* dresses him in doll clothes (p. 59)
* rocks him (p. 61)
* feeds him milk from a doll bottle (p. 61)
 |
| **Chapter Six p. 62-69** (8 p.) Satin on the Trail* Vocabulary
	+ tilts (p. 65) *leans*
	+ clamps (p. 66) *hold together tightly*
	+ slings (p. 66) *to throw with a sudden sweeping motion*
 | In this chapter we learn more about what Paraguay is like. There are* jungle trails (p. 63)
* pretty blue butterflies—note the butterfly net in the picture (p.63)
* toucans and armadillos (p. 69)

Note the step-in words on p. 65 that describe the butterfly's movements |
| **Chapter Seven p. 71-86** (16 p.) Satin and Army Ants* Visual
	+ add to large wall bubble map on “Life in Paraguay”
 | More about what Paraguay is like!* swinging bridge (p. 71)
* clapping the hands to let someone know you are coming (p. 71)
* cooking over an open fire (p. 73)
* animals in the house ( p. 73 and 75)
* army ants (p. 76-79)
* lots of bugs in the house (p. 81)
* pineapple patch (p. 82)
 |
| **Chapter Eight p. 87-95** (9 p.) Satin Goes to School* Learn the Spanish words listed on the poster in the schoolroom
 | In this chapter you read about Mae's school. What was it like? They * studied in English, but learned some Spanish
* the children walked or rode horse to school
* the school had a Spanish name
 |
| **THE WELL** |
| **Chapter Nine p. 96-100** (5 p.) Father Digs a Well* Work on divider
 | In this chapter Father begins to dig a well. * What does it take to dig a well?
* Where did they get their water until the well was dug?

Talk about the water table (children loved this)* Rises when it rains
* Higher in some parts
* Teacher draw example on board and children also draw one
 |
| **Chapter Ten p. 100-109** (10 p.) Water in the Well * Draw a picture of the well (from p. 102)
* Vocabulary word:
	+ Windlass (p. 102) *a horizontal barrel supported on vertical posts and turned by a crank so that the hoisting rope is wound around the barrel*
 | * How deep do wells need to be?
* Do you have a well at your house? Ask children to have parents show their well. Does is look like this one?
* How does their water get from their well to the house?
* How will Mae's family get water from their well to their house?
 |
| **Chapter Eleven p. 110-122** (13 p.) Kitten in the Well * Visual: do a three point summary
	+ Who did what, then what happened, how did it end? Example:
	1. Mother took the lid off the well
	2. Satin jumped into the well
	3. They tried and tried to save him.

*If combining chapters 11-12 for summary skip #1 and add as #3: That night Father and Mother got the dead kitten out.* | This is a sad chapter—Satin drowns in the well. How can you tell Mae is very sad?* Plugs her ears
* runs away
* sobs and sobs
* goes to her bedroom
* lies down on her bed
* her pillow is wet with tears

How can you tell her family cares about Mae?* Mother tries very hard to get Satin out of the well
* They cry for help
* Father gasps
* He wipes away Mae's tears
* He rocks Mae
 |
| **Chapter Twelve p. 123-127** (5 p.) Kitten out of the Well  | Why do they have to get the kitten out of the well? Imagine now drinking the water from this well! (Tell story of dead frog in drinking water in Belize!)* Why is it so hard to get the dead kitten out of the well?
 |
| **THE LONG BUS RIDE**—this chapter tells us a lot about transportation in Paraguay |
| **Chapter Thirteen p. 128-133** (6 p.) The Little, Old Bus* Vocabulary word
	+ Hark (p. 131) *listen, pay close attention*
* Do another 3 point summary
 | Add to “Life in Paraguay” for Mae's family. Look for other things too, but the main theme to look for here is transportation methods.* Mae uses a leaf for a fan
* Family must travel by bus
* Muddy roads—sounds like a common thing; dirt roads
	+ That means lots of rain (so lots of plants, trees . . . )
* No set time for the bus to come; might come/ might not
* Oxen and cart, common way to travel. Why?
* Old buses
* Lots of bugs
 |
| **Chapter Fourteen p. 134-143** (10 p.) The Bus Flies Apart* Find this on the inside map. Note: the map is way out of proportion
* Vocabulary word
	+ Rut ***:*** *a track worn by a wheel or by habitual passage*
	+ Stunned: *shocked, dazed, so astonished you can't think right*
 | A big problem in this story! Look for “step-in” words that describe what the bus does* rattles, shakes, jumps (p. 134)
* rumbles chugs rolls (p. 135)
* jerks (p. 137)

How do you know this bus doesn't have windows? (p. 136)Tell personal stories of buses in El Salvador so full you can't sit |
| **Chapter Fifteen p. 144-147** (4 p.) On the Yellow Bus* Lots of step-in words here!
	+ Page 146, six words describe the creative man's actions: thinks grins, opens, throws, leans, jumps!
	+ Page 147 three words describe the drivers response: smiles, honks, zooms!
 | This chapter tells a lot more about “Life in Paraguay”. The theme is transportation—buses. * Look at the people and things on top of the bus. Why would that never be allowed in the US?
* Explain who the “ticket boy” is and what he does.
* What do the very full buses tell you?
* There aren't enough good buses
* Lots of people need to travel by bus (not many cars owned by country people)

Talk about how the man gets out when the bus is too full to get out the door. *Tell my story of learning I have to PUSH if I want to get out!* |
| **Chapter Sixteen p. 148-150** (3 p.) Stuck in the Mud* Find this on cover map. Note: the map is way out of scale
* Talk about cause and effect—and do a visual
	+ Lots of rain -- muddy roads
	+ Muddy roads -- bus gets stuck
	+ Bus is stuck -- men get out to push
	+ Men push bus out of the mud -- get muddy
	+ Men get back on the bus (remember its crowded!) -- everyone gets muddy!
 | Note how the title summarizes the story!* Why do the men get out and push and the women and children stay on? Is that how it should be? Should men take care of women and children?
 |
| **Chapter Seventeen p. 151-157** (7 p.) In the Village* Vocabulary word
	+ Pell-mell: *running very hurriedly (without order or plan)*
 | More on “Life in Paraguay”: Women carry objects on their head! * Why would the lady and children sell food and drinks to people on buses? (Do they take snacks along on trips?) Does that tell about their level of poverty? *Tell story of small roadside food preparation by spots where buses stop . . . the exhaust fumes, the women caring for babies (changing diapers then returning to food prep without washing their hands)*
* Why are the three boys in such a hurry to be first to the buses?
* Take note of Mae's response of compassion to the little boy.
 |
| **Chapter Eighteen p. 158-164** (7 p.) All Night on the Bus* Find this on the inside map (waiting at the gate). Note: the map is way out of proportion
* More effect from the rain!-- bus cannot go
* Vocabulary word
	+ logging trucks (p.163) *large trucks used to transport many logs/cut down trees*
* Possible 3 point summary:
1. The bus strops because the gate is shut.
2. They spend the night on the bus.
3. The gate opens!!
 | More about life in Paraguay! Think about the patience of the people.What travels on buses besides people?!Talk about the logging trucks—what that tells about Paraguay's natural resources. Why do so many trees grow there? |
| **Chapter Nineteen p. 165-179** (15 p.) Surprise at Joy's House* Note all the “step-in” words on p. 177. When the bus horn honked everyone does something . . .
* jumps
* darts
* darts
* grabs
* runs
* flies
* Vocabulary word
	+ motto (p. 173)
	+ chatter (p. 175)
 | In this chapter Mae has a very happy surprise!How can you tell Mae and Joy are friends?* They hold hands
* They talk and talk
* They walk and skip together
* They smile and laugh together
* Joy gives Mae two special surprises

Note the mention of orange trees  |
| **Chapter Twenty p. 180-189** (10 p.) On the Way Home * Students color and decorate the motto with the verse “It is more blessed . . . “
 | In the last chapter Mae got two gifts. In this chapter she gets to share. Note how it makes her feel on the inside.  |
| **SHEBA** |
| **Chapter Twenty-one p. 190-201** (12 p.) Sheba on the Trail* Vocabulary word
	+ dart (p. 197) discuss multiple meanings; this word used on other pages with different meaning
 | In this chapter Mae starts to teach her dog some tricks!What animals/insects are common in Paraguay?* snakes
* lizards
* bees
* glow-worms

Look up glow-worms in the encyclopedia—under firefly; it is a member of the firefly family. |
| **Chapter Twenty-two p. 202-212** (11 p.) Sheba and the Horse* Vocabulary word
	+ Glee (p. 205) *great joy*
* Finish up on other visuals or perhaps copy of favorite vocabulary words and illustrate
 | In this chapter Mae is delighted to have her good friend Joy come to visit her.  |
| **Chapter Twenty-three p. 213-227** (15p.) Sheba and the Mad Bull* Vocabulary word
	+ yanks (p. 217) *to pull quickly*
	+ bellow (p. 218) *a loud deep sound, often made by bulls*
* List “step-in” words that describe the bulls actions—may want to use the prepared visual for this
 | A mad bull on the loose!  |
| **Chapter Twenty-four p. 228-234** (7 p.) Mae and Her Pets | Sheba gets a bath and Mae enjoys all her pet animalsMake or finish divider for three ring binder |
| **Chapter Twenty-five p. 235-240** (6 p.) Mae's Song from the Well* Vocabulary word
	+ clinks (p. 235) ***:*** *to give out a slight sharp short metallic sound*
* Put visuals in binder
 | Talk about favorite part of book. Allow children to read favorite page. |

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Acts 20:35