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- Students *explain* how Mark Teague's *illustrations* contribute to what is conveyed in Cynthia Rylant's *Poppleton in Winter* to *create the mood and emphasize aspects of characters and setting* in the story. [RL.3.7]
- Students read *fables* and *folktales from diverse cultures* that represent various origin tales, such as Rudyard Kipling's "How the Camel Got His Hump" and Natalie Babbitt's *The Search for Delicious*, and *paraphrase their central message, lesson, or moral*. [RL.2.2]
- Students *describe the overall story structure* of *The Thirteen Clocks* by James Thurber, *describing how the interactions of the characters of the Duke and Princess Saralinda introduce the beginning of the story* and how the suspenseful plot comes to an *end*. [RL.2.5]
- When discussing E. B. White's book *Charlotte's Web*, students *distinguish their own point of view* regarding Wilbur the Pig *from that of Fern Arable as well as from that of the narrator*. [RL.3.6]
- Students *describe how the character* of Bud in Christopher Paul Curtis' story *Bud, Not Buddy* *responds to a major event* in his life of being placed in a foster home. [RL.2.3]
- Students read Paul Fleischman's poem "Fireflies," *determining the meaning of words and phrases in the poem, particularly focusing on identifying his use of nonliteral language* (e.g., "light is the ink we use") and *talking about how it suggests meaning*. [RL.3.4]

Informational Texts

Aliki. *A Medieval Feast*. New York: HarperCollins, 1986. (1983)

It was announced from the palace that the King would soon make a long journey.

On the way to his destination, the King and his party would spend a few nights at Camdenton Manor. The lord of the manor knew what this meant. The king traveled with his Queen, his knights, squires, and other members of his court. There could be a hundred mouths to feed!

Preparations for the visit began at once. The lord and lady of the manor had their serfs to help them. The serfs lived in huts provided for them on the lord's estate, each with its own plot of land. In return, they were bound to serve the lord. They farmed his land, managed his manor house, and if there was a war, they had to go to battle with the lord and the King.

But now they prepared.

The manor had its own church, which was attended by everyone on the estate.

The manor house had to be cleaned, the rooms readied, tents set up for the horsemen, fields fenced for the horses. And above all, provisions had to be gathered for the great feast.

The Royal Suite was redecorated.

Silk was spun, new fabric was woven.

The Royal Crest was embroidered on linen and painted on the King's chair.

The lord and his party went hunting and hawking for fresh meat.

Hunting was a sport for the rich only. The wild animals that lived on the lord's estate belonged to him. Anyone caught poaching—hunting illegally—was severely punished.

Falcons and hawks were prized pets. They were trained to attack birds for their masters to capture.

They trapped rabbits and birds of all kinds, and fished for salmon and eels and trout.

Serfs hid in bushes and caught birds in traps. They set ferrets in burrows to chase out rabbits.

There were fruits and vegetables growing in the garden, herbs and flowers for sauces and salads, and bees made honey for sweetening.

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**Gibbons, Gail. *From Seed to Plant*. New York: Holiday House, 1993. (1991)
From "A 'From Seed to Plant' Project"**

How to raise bean plants

1. Find a clean glass jar. Take a piece of black construction paper and roll it up.
2. Slide the paper into the jar. Fill the jar with water.
3. Wedge the bean seeds between the black paper and the glass. Put the jar in a warm place.
4. In a few days the seeds will begin to sprout. Watch the roots grow down. The shoots will grow up.
5. Put dirt into a big clay pot.
6. Carefully remove the small plants from the glass jar. Place them in the soil, covering them up to the base of their shoots.
7. Water them...and watched them grow.

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Milton, Joyce. *Bats: Creatures of the Night*. Illustrated by Joyce Moffatt. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1993. (1993)

No one has lived on this farm for years.
The barn looks empty.
But it isn't!
Strange creatures are sleeping in the loft.
As the sun goes down, they take to the air.

From BATS: CREATURES OF THE NIGHT by Joyce Milton. Text © 1993 by Joyce Milton. Illustrations © 1993 by Judith Moffatt. Used by permission of Grosset & Dunlap, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. All rights reserved.

Beeler, Selby. *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions Around the World*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. (1998)

Has this ever happened to you?
You find a loose tooth in your mouth.
Yikes! You can wiggle it with your finger.
You can push it back and forth with your tongue.
Then one day it falls out.
There you are with your old baby tooth in your hand and a big hole in your mouth.
It happens to everyone, everywhere, all over the world.
"Look! Look! My tooth fell out! My tooth fell out!"
But what happens next?
What in the world do you do with your tooth?

North America

United States

I put my tooth under my pillow. While I'm sound asleep, the Tooth Fairy will come into my room, take my tooth, and leave some money in its place.

Mexico

When I go to sleep, I leave my tooth in a box on the bedside table. I hope El Ratón, the magic mouse, will take my tooth and bring me some money. He leaves more money for a front tooth.

Yupik

My mother wraps my tooth in a food, like meat or bread. Then I feed it to a female dog and say, “Replace this tooth with a better one.”

Yellowknife Déné

My mother or grandmother takes my tooth and puts it in a tree and then my family dances around it. This makes certain that my new tooth will grow in as straight as a tree.

Navajo

My mother saves my tooth until my mouth stops hurting. Then we take my tooth to the southeast, away from our house. We bury the tooth on the east side of a healthy young sagebrush, rabbit bush, or pinyon tree because we believe that east is the direction associated with childhood.

Excerpted from THROW YOUR TOOTH ON THE ROOF: Tooth Traditions From Around the World. Text Copyright © 1998 by Selby B. Beeler. Used by Permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Leonard, Heather. *Art Around the World*. New York: Rigby, 1998. (1998)

Ruffin, Frances E. *Martin Luther King and the March on Washington*. Illustrated by Stephen Marchesi. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 2000. (2000)

August 28, 1963

It is a hot summer day in Washington, D.C.
More than 250,000 people are pouring into the city.
They have come by plane, by train, by car, and by bus.

From MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON: ALL ABOARD READING by Frances E. Ruffin, illustrated by Stephen Marchesi. Text © 2001 by Frances E. Ruffin. Illustrations © 2001 by Stephen Marchesi. Used by permission of Grosset & Dunlap, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. All rights reserved.

St. George, Judith. *So You Want to Be President?* Illustrated by David Small. New York: Philomel, 2000. (2000)

Every single President has taken this oath: “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Only thirty-five words! But it’s a big order if you’re President of this country. Abraham Lincoln was tops at filling that order. “I know very well that many others might in this matter or as in others, do better than I can,” he said. “But...I am here. I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take.”

That’s the bottom line. Tall, short, fat, thin, talkative, quiet, vain, humble, lawyer, teacher, or soldier—this is what most of our Presidents have tried to do, each in his own way. Some succeeded. Some failed. If you want to be President—a good President—pattern your self after the best. Our best have asked more of themselves than they thought they could give. They have had the courage, spirit, and will to do what they knew was right. Most of all, their first priority has always been the people and the country they served.

From SO YOU WANT TO BE PRESIDENT? By Judith St. George, illustrated by David Small. Text © 2000 by Judith St. George. Illustrations © 2000 by David Small. Used by permission of Philomel Books, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc, all rights reserved.

Einspruch, Andrew. *Crittercam*. National Geographic Windows on Literacy Series. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2004. (2004)

Kudlinski, Kathleen V. *Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs*. Illustrated by S. D. Schindler. New York: Dutton, 2005. (2005)

Long, long ago, before people knew anything about dinosaurs, giant bones were found in China. Wise men who saw the bones tried to guess what sort of enormous animal they could have come from.

After they studied the fossil bones, the ancient Chinese decided that they came from dragons. They thought these dragons must have been magic dragons to be so large. And they believed that dragons could still be alive.

Boy, were they wrong!

No one knows exactly what dinosaurs looked like. All that is left of them are fossil bones and a few other clues. Now that we think that many of our own past guesses about dinosaurs were just as wrong as those of ancient China.

Some of our mistakes were little ones. When the first fossil bones of *Iguanodon* were found, one was shaped like a rhino's horn. Scientists guessed that the strange horn fit like a spike on *Iguanodon's* nose

Boy, were we wrong about *Iguanodon*!

When a full set of fossil bones was found later, there were two pointed bones, they were part of *Iguanodon's* hands, not its nose!

Other new clues show us that we may have been wrong about every kind of dinosaur.

Some of our first drawings of dinosaurs showed them with their elbows and knees pointing out to the side, like a lizard's. With legs like that, big dinosaurs could only waddle clumsily on all fours or float underwater.

Now we know that their legs were straight under them, like a horse's. Dinosaurs were not clumsy. The sizes and shapes of their leg bones seem to show that some were as fast and graceful as deer.

From BOY, WERE WE WRONG ABOUT DINOSAURS by Kathleen Kudlinski, illustrated by S.D. Schindler. Text copyright © 2005 by Kathleen V. Kudlinski. Illustrations © 2005 by S.D. Schindler. Used by permission of Dutton Children's Books, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. All rights reserved.

Davies, Nicola. *Bat Loves the Night*. Illustrated by Sarah Fox-Davies. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick, 2001. (2001)

Floca, Brian. *Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11*. New York: Atheneum, 2009. (2009)

High above there is the Moon, cold and quiet, no air, no life, but glowing in the sky.

Here below there are three men who close themselves in special clothes, who—click—lock hands in heavy gloves, who—click—lock heads in large round helmets.

It is summer here in Florida, hot, and near the sea. But now these men are dressed for colder, stranger places. They walk with stiff and awkward steps in suits not made for Earth.

They have studied and practiced and trained, and said good-bye to family and friends. If all goes well, they will be gone for one week, gone where no one has been.

Their two small spaceships are *Columbia* and *Eagle*. They sit atop the rocket that will raise them into space, a monster of a machine: It stands thirty stories, it weighs six million pounds, a tower full of fuel and fire and valves and pipes and engines, too big to believe, but built to fly—the mighty, massive Saturn V.

The astronauts squeeze in to *Columbia's* sideways seats, lying on their backs, facing toward the sky—Neil Armstrong on the left, Michael Collins in the right, Buzz Aldrin in the middle.

Click and they fasten straps.

Click and the hatch is sealed.

There they wait, while the Saturn hums beneath them.

Near the rocket, in Launch Control, and far away in Houston, in Mission Control, there are numbers, screens, and charts, ways of watching and checking every piece of the rocket and ships, the fuel, the valves, the pipes, the engines, the beats of the astronauts' hearts.

As the countdown closes, each man watching is asked the question: GO/NO GO?

And each man answers back: "GO." "GO." "GO."

Apollo 11 is GO for launch.

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Thomson, Sarah L. *Where Do Polar Bears Live?* Illustrated by Jason Chin. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. (2010)

This island is covered with snow. No trees grow. Nothing has green leaves. The land is white as far as you can see.

Then something small and round and black pokes up out of the snow.

A black nose sniffs the air. Then a smooth white head appears. A mother polar bear heaves herself out of her den.

A cub scrambles after her.

When the cub was born four months ago, he was no bigger than a guinea pig. Blind and helpless, he snuggled in his mother's fur. He drank her milk and grew, safe from the long Arctic winter.

Outside the den, on some days, it was fifty degrees below zero. From October to February, the sun never rose.

Now it is spring—even though snow still covers the land. The cub is about the size of a cocker spaniel. He's ready to leave the den. For the first time, he sees bright sunlight and feels the wind ruffle his fur

The cub tumbles and slides down icy hills. His play makes him strong and teaches him to walk and run in snow.

Like his mother, he cub is built to survive in the Arctic. Hi white fur will grow to be six inches thick—longer than your hand. The skin beneath the cub's fur is black. It soaks up the heat of the sun. Under the skin is a layer of fat. Like a snug blanket, this blubber keeps in the heat of the bear's body.

Polar bears get too hot more easily than they get too cold. They stretch out on the ice to cool off.

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Read-Aloud Informational Texts

**Freedman, Russell. *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. (1987)
From Chapter One: "The Mysterious Mr. Lincoln"**

Abraham Lincoln wasn't the sort of man who could lose himself in a crowd. After all, he stood six feet four inches tall. And to top it off, he wore a high silk hat.

His height was mostly in his long bony legs. When he sat in a chair, he seemed no taller than anyone else. I was only when he stood up that he towered over other men.

At first glance, most people thought he was homely. Lincoln thought so too, once referring to his "poor, lean, lank face." As a young man he was sensitive about his gawky looks, but in time, he learned to laugh at himself. When a rival called him "two-faced" during a political debate, Lincoln replied: "I leave it to my audience. If I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one?"

According to those who knew him, Lincoln was a man of many faces. In repose, he often seemed sad and gloomy. But when he began to speak, his expression changed. "The dull, listless features dropped like a mask," said a Chicago newspaperman. "The eyes began to sparkle, the mouth to smile, the whole countenance was wreathed in animation, so that a stranger would have said, 'Why, this man, so angular and solemn a moment ago, is really handsome.'"

Lincoln was the most photographed man of his time, but his friends insisted that no photo ever did him justice. It's no wonder. Back then cameras required long exposures. The person being photographed had to "freeze" as the seconds ticked by. If he blinked an eye, the picture would be blurred. That's why Lincoln looks so stiff and formal in his photos. We never see him laughing or joking.

Coles, Robert. *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. Illustrated by George Ford. New York: Scholastic, 1995. (1995)

Ruby Bridges was born in a small cabin near Tylertown, Mississippi.

"We were very poor, very, very poor," Ruby said. "My daddy worked picking crops. We just barely got by. There were

times when we didn't have much to eat. The people who owned the land were bringing in machines to pick the crops, so my daddy lost his job, and that's when we had to move.

"I remember us leaving. I was four, I think."

In 1957, the family moved to New Orleans. Ruby's father became a janitor. Her mother took care of the children during the day. After they were tucked in bed, Ruby's mother went to work scrubbing floors in a bank.

Every Sunday, the family went to church.

"We wanted our children to be near God's spirit," Ruby's mother said. "We wanted them to start feeling close to Him from the start."

At that time, black children and white children went to separate schools in New Orleans. The black children were not able to receive the same education as the white children. It wasn't fair. And it was against the nation's law.

In 1960, a judge ordered four black girls to go to two white elementary schools. Three of the girls were sent to McDonogh 19. Six-year-old Ruby Bridges was sent to first grade in the William Frantz Elementary School.

Ruby's parents were proud that their daughter had been chosen to take part in an important event in American history. They went to church.

"We sat there and prayed to God," Ruby's mother said, "that we'd all be strong and we'd have courage and we'd get through any trouble; and Ruby would be a good girl and she'd hold her head up high and be a credit to her own people and a credit to all the American people. We prayed long and we prayed hard."

On Ruby's first day, a large crowd of angry white people gathered outside the Frantz Elementary School. The people carried signs that said they didn't want black children in a white school. People called Ruby names; some wanted to hurt her. The city and state police did not help Ruby.

The President of the United States ordered federal marshals to walk with Ruby into the school building. The marshals carried guns.

Every day, for weeks that turned into months, Ruby experienced that kind of school day.

She walked to the Frantz School surrounded by marshals. Wearing a clean dress and a bow in her hair and carrying her lunch pail, Ruby walked slowly for the first few blocks. As Ruby approached the school, she saw a crowd of people marching up and down the street. Men and women and children shouted at her. They pushed toward her. The marshals kept them from Ruby by threatening to arrest them.

Ruby would hurry through the crowd and not say a word.

From THE STORY OF RUBY BRIDGES by Robert Coles. Copyright © 1995 by Robert Coles. Used by permission of Scholastic Inc.

Wick, Walter. *A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder*. New York: Scholastic, 1997. (1997)

From "Soap Bubbles"

There are few objects you can make that have both the dazzling beauty and delicate precision of a soap bubble. Shown here at actual size, this bubble is a nearly perfect sphere. Its shimmering liquid skin is five hundred times thinner than a human hair.

Bubbles made of plain water break almost as quickly as they form. That's because surface tension is so strong the bubbles collapse. Adding soap to water weakens water's surface tension. This allows a film of soapy water to stretch and stretch without breaking.

When you blow a bubble, it looks somewhat like a drop of water emerging from a faucet. And just like the surface of a drop of water, the bubble's surface shrinks to form a sphere. Spheres and circles are mathematical shapes. Because they can form spontaneously, they are also shapes of nature.

From A DROP OF WATER: A BOOK OF SCIENCE AND WONDER by Walter Wick. Scholastic Inc./Scholastic Press. Copyright © 1997 by Walter Wick. Used by permission.

Smith, David J. *If the World Were a Village: A Book about the World's People*. Illustrated by Shelagh Armstrong. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2002. (2002)
From “Welcome to the Global Village”

Earth is a crowded place and it is getting more crowded all the time. As for January 1, 2002 the world's population was 6 billion, 200 million—that's 6,200,000,000. Twenty-three countries have more than fifty million (50,000,000) people. Ten countries each have more than one hundred million (100,000,000) people. China has nearly one billion, three hundred million people (1,300,000,000).

Numbers like this are hard to understand, but what if we imagined the whole population of the world as a village of just 100 people? In this imaginary village, each person would represent about sixty-two million (62,000,000) people from the real world.

One hundred people would fit nicely into a small village. By learning about the villagers—who they are and how they live—perhaps we can find out more about our neighbors in the real world and the problems our planet may face in the future.

Ready to enter the global village? Go down into the valley and walk through the gates. Dawn is chasing away the night shadows. The smell of wood smoke hangs in the air. A baby awakes and cries.

Come and meet the people of the global village.

Material from If the World Were a Village: A Book about the World's People written by David J. Smith is used by permission of Kids Can Press Ltd., Toronto. Text © 2002 David J. Smith.

Aliki. *Ah, Music!* New York: Harper Collins, 2005. (2003)

What is music?

Music is sound.

If you hum a tune, play an instrument, or clap out a rhythm, you are making music. You are listening to it, too.

[...]

Music through the Ages

Music grew from one century to the next. In the early and middle ages, new forms of music developed. Christianity inspired church music. Music became polyphonic—played and sung in two or more melodic parts. Notations were invented. Music was no longer a one-time performance. Now it would be written and preserved for other musicians and generations.

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Mark, Jan. *The Museum Book: A Guide to Strange and Wonderful Collections*. Illustrated by Richard Holland. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick, 2007. (2007)
From Chapter One

Suppose you went into a museum and you didn't know what it was. Imagine: it's raining, there's a large building nearby with an open door, and you don't have to pay to go in. It looks like an ancient Greek temple. Temples are places of worship, so you'd better go in quietly.

But inside it doesn't seem much like any temple or mosque or church you have ever been in. That is, it looks like all of them, but the furniture is out of place. Perhaps it's a hotel; it has fifty rooms, but there is only one bed, although it is a very splendid bed. Apparently Queen Elizabeth I slept in it. Or perhaps there are fifty beds, but they are all in one room and you can't sleep in any of them. There are red velvet ropes to keep you out.

Farther down the corridor you notice a steam locomotive. It's a train station! But there is no track except for a few yards that the engine is resting on, and already you have seen something else. Across the hall is a totem pole that goes right up to the roof, standing next to a Viking ship. Beyond it is a room full of glass cases displaying rocks, more kinds of rocks than you ever knew existed, from diamonds to meteorites. From where you are standing, you can see into the next room, where the glass cases are full of stuffed fish; and the next, which is lined with shelves of Roman pottery; and the next, which is crowded with birds; and after that, lions and giraffes and pandas and whales.

It must be a zoo.

[...]

Just then you see someone walking toward you who isn't dead—you hope. He is wearing a uniform with a badge on it that reads Guide.

"Enjoying yourself?" he says.

You say, "Where did you get all this stuff?"

"All?" he says. "These are just the things we show to the public. Down in the basement there's a hundred thousand times more. Do you know," he murmurs, "we've got twenty-seven two-headed sheep?"

"But why?" you ask. "Why do you have any two-headed sheep.

"Because people give them to us," he says. "And so that you can look at them. Where else would you see one? Where else would you be able to see the mummy case of King Tutankhamun, the first plane to fly the Atlantic, the first train engine, the last dodo, a diplodocus, the astrolabe of Ahmad of Isfahan (an example of the oldest scientific instrument in the world), chicken-skin gloves, the lantern carried by Guy Fawkes when he went to blow up the British Parliament buildings, a murderer's trigger finger—?"

"But where am I?" you say. "What is this place?"

And he says, "It's a museum."

THE MUSEUM BOOK. Text Copyright © 2007 Jan Mark. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA.

D'Aluisio, Faith. *What the World Eats*. Photographed by Peter Menzel. New York: Random House, 2008. (2008)

Arnosky, Jim. *Wild Tracks! A Guide to Nature's Footprints*. New York: Sterling, 2008. (2008)

"Feline Tracks"

Of all the larger predators, wildcats are the most likely to use the same trails again and again. In deep snow, their habitual routes become gully trails in which the feline tracks going to and coming from their hunting grounds are preserved, down out of the wind, away from blowing snow.

A cat's sharp retractable claws do not show in its track unless the cat has lunged to catch its prey or scratched the ground to cover its droppings. Only cats thoroughly cover their droppings.

Bobcat, lion, and jaguar paws all have three-lobed heels. The lynx, the ocelot, and the jaguarondi have single lobed-heels.

The wildcats we have in North America are, from the smallest to the largest: ocelot, jaguarondi, bobcat, lynx, American lion, and jaguar.

From Wild Tracks! A Guide to Nature's Footprints © 2008 by Jim Arnosky. Used with permission from Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.

Deedy, Carmen Agra. *14 Cows for America*. In collaboration with Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah. Illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez. Atlanta: Peachtree, 2009. (2009)

The remote village waits for a story to be told. News travels slowly to this corner of Kenya. As Kimeli nears his village, he watches a herd of bull giraffes cross the open grassland. He smiles. He has been away a long time.

A girl sitting under a guava tree sees him first and cries out to the others. The children run to him with the speed and grace of cheetahs. He greets them with a gentle touch on his head, a warrior's blessing.

The rest of the tribe soon surrounds Kimeli. These are his people. These are the Maasai.

Once they were feared warriors. Now they live peaceably as nomadic cattle herders. They treat their cows as kindly as they do their children. They sign to them. They give them names. They shelter the young ones in their homes. Without the herd, the tribe might starve. To the Maasai, the cow is life.

"*Súpa*. Hello," Kimeli hears again and again. Everyone wants to greet him. His eyes find his mother across the *en-kāng*, the ring of huts with their roofs of sun-baked dung. She spreads her arms and calls to him, "*Aakúa*. Welcome, my son." Kimeli sighs. He is home.

This is sweeter and sadder because he cannot stay. He must return to the faraway country where he is learning to be a doctor. He thinks of New York then. He remembers September.

A child asks if he has brought any stories. Kimeli nods. He has brought with him one story. It has burned a hole in his heart.

But first he must speak with the elders.

Later, in a tradition as old as the Maasai, the rest of the tribe gathers under an acacia tree to hear the story. There is a terrible stillness in the air as the tale unfolds. With growing disbelief, men, women, and children listen. Buildings so tall they can touch the sky? Fires so hot they can melt iron? Smoke and dust so thick they can block out the sun?

The story ends. More than three thousand souls are lost. A great silence falls over the Maasai. Kimeli waits. He knows his people. They are fierce when provoked, but easily moved to kindness when they hear of suffering or injustice.

At last, an elder speaks. He is shaken, but above all, he is sad. “What can we do for these poor people?” Nearby, a cow lows. Heads turn toward the herd. “To the Maasai,” Kimeli says softly, “the cow is life.”

Turning to the elders, Kimeli offers his only cow, Enkarûs. He asks for their blessing. They give it gladly. But they want to offer something more.

The tribe sends word to the United States Embassy in Nairobi. In response, the embassy sends a diplomat. His jeep jounces along the dusty, rugged roads. He is hot and tired. He thinks he is going to meet with Maasai elders. He cannot be more wrong. As the jeep nears the edge of the village the man sits up. Clearly, this is no ordinary diplomatic visit. This is...

...a ceremony. Hundreds of Maasai greet the American in full tribal splendor. At the sight of the brilliant blood-red tunics and spectacular beaded collars, he can only marvel.

It is a day of sacred ritual. Young warriors dance, leaping into the air like fish from a stream. Women sing mournful songs. Children fill their bellies with milk. Speeches are exchanged. And now it is time.

Kimeli and his people gather on a sacred knoll, far from the village. The only sound is the gentle chiming of cowbells. The elders chant a blessing in Maa as the Maasai people of Kenya present...

...fourteen cows for America.

Because there is no nation so powerful it cannot be wounded, nor a people so small they cannot offer mighty comfort.

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Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts

- Students read Aiki’s description of *A Medieval Feast* and *demonstrate* their *understanding* of all that goes into such an *event* by *asking questions* pertaining to *who, what, where, when, why, and how* such a meal happens and by *answering using key details*. [RI.2.1]
- Students *describe the reasons* behind Joyce Milton’s statement that bats are nocturnal in her *Bats: Creatures of the Night* and how she *supports the points* she is *making in the text*. [RI.2.8]
- Students read Selby Beeler’s *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions Around the World* and *identify what Beeler wants to answer* as well as explain the *main purpose of the text*. [RI.2.6]
- Students *determine the meanings of words and phrases* encountered in Sarah L. Thomson’s *Where Do Polar Bears Live?*, such as *cub, den, blubber, and the Arctic*. [RI.2.4]
- Students *explain how the main idea* that Lincoln had “many faces” in Russell Freedman’s *Lincoln: A Photobiography* is *supported by key details* in the text. [RI.3.2]

- Students read Robert Coles's retelling of a series of historical events in *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. Using their knowledge of how *cause and effect* gives order to events, they use specific language to describe the sequence of events that leads to Ruby desegregating her school. [RI.3.3]
- Students explain how the specific image of a soap bubble and other accompanying illustrations in Walter Wick's *A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder* contribute to and clarify their understanding of bubbles and water. [RI.2.7]
- Students use text features, such as the table of contents and headers, found in Alik's text *Ah, Music!* to identify relevant sections and locate information relevant to a given topic (e.g., rhythm, instruments, harmony) quickly and efficiently. [RI.3.5]