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INFORMAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE INVENTORY: TEST YOURSELF

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Educators are frequently advised to familiarize themselves with children's literature. Knowledge of books at a wide range of interest and ability levels will assist teachers in providing books for recreational reading in the classroom, recommending books to students, setting up individualized reading programs, and reading aloud to students. Based on Huck's (1966) Inventory of Children's Literary Background, which evaluated children's knowledge of well-liked literature, the following instrument was developed for teachers to assess their knowledge of children's books. An answer key and suggestions for maintenance or "remediation" appear at the conclusion of the inventory.

1. Mrs. Jonathan Frisby became the aide and confidante of
 - a. a sophisticated society of rats
 - b. two wealthy neglected children
 - c. a clever mouse detective
2. Sylvester the donkey accidentally turned into
 - a. a mouse
 - b. a small boy
 - c. a rock
3. Taran and Gurgi were in pursuit of
 - a. the Holy Grail
 - b. the beautiful princess of Dallben
 - c. Hen Wen, the oracular pig
4. Lost on the Arctic Alaskan plains,
Julie was befriended by
 - a. an Eskimo family
 - b. a pack of wolves
 - c. a fur trapper
5. Annie's grandmother will die when
 - a. her mother finishes weaving the rug
 - b. the corn crop is harvested
 - c. the tribe breaks camp and moves on
6. Two runaways became curious about a sculpture
by Michelangelo when they hid out in
 - a. the Sistine Chapel
 - b. the Louvre
 - c. the Metropolitan Museum of Art

7. Whose fault was it that Mother Owl wouldn't wake the sun?
 - a. Father Owl's fault
 - b. the mosquito's fault
 - c. the North Wind's fault
8. A kidnapped boy played the fife
 - a. in a Civil War prison camp
 - b. for a Revolutionary War regiment at Valley Forge
 - c. on a slave ship
9. Little Obadiah was befriended by
 - a. a puppy
 - b. a seagull
 - c. a goat
10. M. C. Higgins watched people coming and going
 - a. from the lighthouse window
 - b. from the top of a flag pole
 - c. from a secluded mountain cabin
11. More than anything, William wanted this to play with:
 - a. a velveteen rabbit
 - b. a teddy bear
 - c. a doll
12. This literal-minded maid always did exactly as she was told:
 - a. Mary Poppins
 - b. Queenie Peavy
 - c. Amelia Bedelia
13. His "day" began with gum in his hair and ended when he had to wear his railroad train pajamas:
 - a. Max
 - b. Alexander
 - c. Freddie
14. The Herdmans were "the worst kids in the history of the world" until they
 - a. joined a traveling circus
 - b. were adopted by understanding parents
 - c. became part of a Christmas pageant
15. Her magic pasta pot caused problems for Big Anthony:
 - a. Strega Nona
 - b. Baba Yaga
 - c. Tattercoats
16. This younger brother swallowed Peter's pet turtle:
 - a. Alexander
 - b. Fudgie
 - c. Michael
17. The tenth good thing about Barney was
 - a. he helped flowers grow
 - b. he always got "A's" in arithmetic
 - c. he was a great ball player

18. Will Stanton sought the six Signs of Life in order to
 - a. defeat the Cauldron-Born
 - b. keep the Dark from rising
 - c. overcome the Shadow Beast
19. Peter didn't want this painted pink for his new baby sister
 - a. his crib
 - b. his dish
 - c. his favorite chair
20. Winnie Foster discovered the spring that gave the Tucks
 - a. everlasting life
 - b. supernatural powers
 - c. all the fish they could eat
21. Dragons bake bread and a rabbit is the host
 - a. in King Reginald's palace
 - b. on Market Street
 - c. at William Blake's Inn
22. Meg and Charles Wallace were able to travel through space by creating a wrinkle in time called
 - a. kything
 - b. warp factor
 - c. tesseract
23. With Bangs' help, Sam learned
 - a. the importance of telling the truth
 - b. the proper way to care for a cat
 - c. how to swim in the ocean
24. Jess and Leslie created this secret kingdom in the woods:
 - a. Prydain
 - b. Terabithia
 - c. Narnia
25. Some courageous children buried their own father under the direction of this resourceful sister:
 - a. Mary Call Luther
 - b. Caddie Woodlawn
 - c. Sarah Noble
26. Duffy and the Devil is a Cornish version of this folk tale:
 - a. Jack and the Beanstalk
 - b. Sleeping Beauty
 - c. Rumpelstiltskin
27. Chester was convinced that the family's pet rabbit Bunnacula was
 - a. raiding the garden
 - b. really a vampire
 - c. under the spell of a witch

28. To play this game, you must read all the directions and play until someone reaches the end:
- the Egypt Game
 - the Westing Game
 - Jumanji
29. This coon-dog was devoted to his sharecropper master and had a voice that was loudest in the countryside:
- Candy
 - Thunderpup
 - Souder
30. He ate through an apple on Monday, two pears on Tuesday, three plums on Wednesday and much, much more:
- Gregory, the terrible eater
 - Ralph S. Mouse
 - the very hungry caterpillar
31. The Indian girl Karana lived
- in the mountains of New Mexico
 - on a Pacific island shaped like a fish
 - on the Alaskan tundra
32. When Mickey fell into the cake batter, he was in
- a bakery
 - the night kitchen
 - a cooking pot belonging to the giant's wife
33. She was determined to keep her father from smoking:
- Ramona
 - Laura
 - Elizabeth
34. The "Funny Little Woman" lived in
- Japan
 - Mexico
 - Kansas
35. Annabelle had a "freaky" day when
- she was transported to another planet
 - she walked into an old wardrobe
 - she turned into her mother
36. Frances is
- a mole
 - a badger
 - a muskrat
37. This boy detective always solves his case:
- the Great Brain
 - Encyclopedia Brown
 - Hector Hobbs

38. When Moon Shadow came to Chinatown, he shared his father's dream of
- building a flying machine
 - taming a dragon
 - opening a chain of Chinese laundries
39. Viola Swamp was the best substitute for this teacher
- Miss Finney
 - Miss Nelson
 - Miss Brooks
40. Doctor De Soto did "good work," but refused to treat dangerous animals. What was his profession?
- a dentist
 - a veterinarian
 - a cook

For maintaining or updating knowledge of current children's literature, recommendations for teachers are as follows:

- Take a course in children's literature.
- Read journal reviews of children's books. The Reading Teacher, Journal of Reading, Language Arts, The Horn Book, and School Library Journal review books monthly. The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books is comprised totally of reviews of children's books.
- Become familiar with what students are reading. Have students keep reading records, involve them in creative book sharing activities, and conduct interest inventories. Much information can be gained just by observing students and what books they check out of the school library.
- Read selections from the IRA/CBC "Children's Choices" lists, which have appeared in the October issues of The Reading Teacher since 1975.
- More than 30 states have children's book award programs in which school children vote for favorite books. Find out if such a program exists in your area and read books from the list.
- Use the many bibliographies of "Best Books" for any given year as reading lists. These include "Notable Children's Trade Books in Social Studies" (Social Education, April issue), "Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children" (Science and Children, March issue), and the American Library Association's "Notable Books."
- Browse the children's section of bookstores and the public library.
- Ask the school librarian for publishers' pamphlets or catalogs promoting new children's books.

Answer Key

- a. O'Brien, Robert C. Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH. New York: Atheneum, 1971.
- c. Steig, William. Sylvester and the Magic Pebble. New York: Windmill, 1969.

3. c. Alexander, Lloyd. The Book of Three. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.
4. b. George, Jean. Julie of the Wolves. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.
5. a. Miles, Miska. Annie and the Old One. Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1971.
6. c. Konigsburg, E. L. From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. New York: Atheneum, 1967.
7. b. Aardema, Verna. Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears. New York: Dial, 1975.
8. c. Fox, Paula. The Slave Dancer. Scarsdale, N.Y.: Bradbury, 1973.
9. b. Turkle, Brinton. Thy Friend, Obadiah. New York: Viking, 1969.
10. b. Hamilton, Virginia. M. C. Higgins, The Great. New York: Macmillan, 1974.
11. c. Zolotow, Charlotte. William's Doll. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.
12. c. Parish, Peggy. Amelia Bedelia. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
13. b. Viorst, Judith. Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. New York: Atheneum, 1972.
14. c. Robinson, Barbara. The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.
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16. b. Blume, Judy. Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing. New York: Dutton, 1972.
17. a. Viorst, Judith. The Tenth Good Thing About Barney. New York: Atheneum, 1971.
18. b. Cooper, Susan. The Dark Is Rising. New York: Atheneum, 1973.
19. c. Keats, Ezra Jack. Peter's Chair. New York: Harper & Row 1967.
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23. a. Ness, Evaline. Sam, Bangs and Moonshine. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.
24. b. Paterson, Katherine. Bridge to Terabithia. New York: Crowell 1977.
25. a. Cleaver, Vera & Bill. Where the Lilies Bloom. New York: Lippincott, 1969.

26. c. Zemach, Harve. Duffy and the Devil. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973.
27. b. Howe, James & Deborah. Bunnacula. New York: Atheneum, 1979.
28. c. Van Allsburg, Chris. Jumanji. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.
29. c. Armstrong, William. Sounder. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
30. c. Carle, Eric. The Very Hungry Caterpillar. New York: Collins-World, 1969.
31. b. O'Dell, Scott. Island of the Blue Dolphins. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960.
32. b. Sendak, Maurice. In the Night Kitchen. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
33. a. Cleary, Beverly. Ramona and Her Father. New York: Morrow, 1977.
34. a. Mosel, Arlene. The Funny Little Woman. New York: Dutton, 1972.
35. c. Rodgers, Mary. Freaky Friday. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.
36. b. Hoban, Russell. Best Friends for Frances. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
37. b. Sobol, Donald. Encyclopedia Brown, Boy Detective. New York: Nelson, 1963.
38. a. Yep, Laurence. Dragonwings. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
39. b. Allard, Harry. Miss Nelson Is Missing. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
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