

**Updated and Revised**



**Grade**

**4**

**SPECTRUM**

# Reading



*Excellent Tool for  
Standardized Test Preparation!*

- Cause and effect
- Character analysis
- Reading comprehension
- Context practice
- Research skills
- Answer key

# Applecreek Orchard

*Have you ever picked fruit in an orchard?*

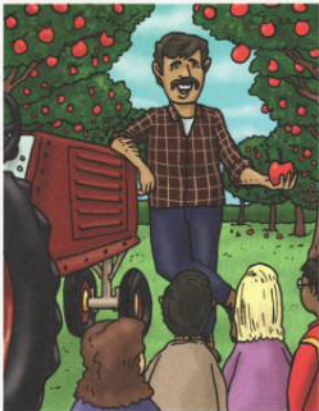
1 On Friday morning, the sky was bright and clear, and the air was crisp. The school bus turned onto the gravel road that led to Tomás's uncle's apple orchard. As the bus pulled up to the small white house with green shutters, a large man with dark hair and a wide grin came outside.

2 Tomás's class got off the bus and stretched. Ms. Hallowell shook Uncle Luis's hand. "Thank you so much for allowing our class to visit your orchard," she said. "It's all they could talk about this week."

3 Uncle Luis laughed. "Well, I'm glad you could all come," he said to the class. "Are you ready to do some picking?" he asked in a booming voice.

4 "Yes!" shouted Ms. Hallowell's class.

5 "Well, hop up on the tractor bed, and remember to keep your arms and legs inside at all times," said Uncle Luis.



Spectrum Reading Grade 4

6 Tomás's uncle stopped the tractor at the beginning of a neat row of trees that were bursting with ripe fruit. He turned to the class. "Northern California is a wonderful place to grow apples," he said. "We have a lot of the weather they like—rainy springs, warm summers, and cool, crisp nights. Here at Applecreek Orchards, we mostly grow three varieties of apples: Granny Smith, Braeburn, and Pink Lady. Today, you'll be picking Braeburn apples. They are sweet, spicy, and crisp. They taste good raw, but they are also good for cooking."

7 "Who picks all your apples?" asked Cara, who was sitting next to Tomás.

8 "Every fall, I hire a crew to come and help me pick them. They work long days, seven days a week, just to make sure that the apples are picked at the right time," answered Uncle Luis.

9 "Once all the apples are picked, what do you do all winter?" asked Tomás's friend Kelly. "Do you get to go on vacation?"

10 Uncle Luis chuckled. "There is still a lot of work to do in the orchard during the winter. We have to grade, or assign categories, to the apples. Then, they have to be packed and shipped all around the country. We ship apples to places as far away as Florida. We also have to prune the trees. That helps them stay healthy and grow in the spring. It also lets more light reach the leaves and the apples."

11 "Whew!" said Tomás. "That sounds like a lot of work."

12 Uncle Luis nodded and handed Tomás a glossy red apple he had just picked. "Try this," he told his nephew. Tomás bit into the apple, and a bit of sweet juice ran down his chin. "What do you think?" asked Uncle Luis. "Is it worth all the hard work?"

13 Tomás's mouth was full of apple, so all he could do was nod and smile.

# The Wild Side of the Trail

*What kinds of wild animals do you see near your home?*

<sup>1</sup> If you ever decide to hike the Appalachian Trail, you might run into some interesting animals along the way. Hikers are often both excited and apprehensive about spotting a black bear. In some parts of the country, such as Georgia and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, black bears have become used to humans and are no longer frightened of them. It might seem strange to you that a bear would be frightened of a human being. This fear often protects both bears and humans.

<sup>2</sup> Most hikers do not run into a problem with bears on the trail. They just have to be sure to hang their food high in a tree at night. They also must be careful never to come between a mother bear and her cubs. A mother bear who thinks her cubs are in danger can be very aggressive.

<sup>3</sup> Another type of animal that you might see if you hike the Appalachian Trail is a snake. There are many different kinds of snakes that live along the trail. Most of them are not poisonous, but there are poisonous copperheads and rattlesnakes in some areas. The best way to be safe around snakes is to wear boots for

protection and to avoid putting your hands or feet in places you cannot see. It is also helpful to have a book that allows you to identify the animals you see.

<sup>4</sup> The nine-banded armadillo might be one of the strangest and most unusual looking animals you could meet on the trail. The armadillo is a mammal whose name means *little man in armor* in Spanish. It has hard, bony plates that cover its head, body, and tail. Even though it is so well protected, the armadillo can also run quickly and burrow underground. It can even swim if it has to.

<sup>5</sup> Another strange and interesting animal is the southern flying squirrel. This type of squirrel has an extra fold of skin between its front and rear legs. The skin acts as a sail or a parachute. Even though this squirrel cannot really fly, it can glide as far as 80 yards through the air, usually to get from one treetop to another.

<sup>6</sup> If you walk quietly and look carefully, you might have a chance to see some animals that very few people ever have the opportunity to see in the wild.



# Seeing the World Through Different Eyes

*What types of artwork do you like?*

<sup>1</sup> Today, artists can make whatever kind of art they want. A painting might be as realistic as a photograph, or it might look like smears and splashes across the canvas. Not very long ago, however, a powerful government organization in France decided what could and could not be considered art. A brave group of painters, called the *Impressionists*, challenged these ideas and changed art forever.

<sup>2</sup> In the middle of the 1800s, France was considered the most important place in the world for art. One reason for that was the Academy, a government organization with a strict set of rules about art. To be accepted by the Academy, an artist had to be very talented. Artists also had to paint exactly the way the Academy wanted them to. How could an artist be creative if he or she was told what to create?

<sup>3</sup> Each year, the Academy had an exhibition of the art they had decided was the best. In 1864, a group of artists who did not get into the show became frustrated. They felt that their paintings were not bad; the paintings were just different. After complaining to the government, these artists were given their own show. It was called the *Salon des Refusés*, which means the *exhibition of rejects*.

<sup>4</sup> The Academy thought all art should look realistic. The Impressionists wanted to explore other ideas. They were more interested in trying to show movement and the bright colors of daylight. For example, if you move your hand quickly in front of your face, it looks blurry. To the Impressionists, it was more real to show these blurry images than it was to paint a scene frozen like a photograph. It was also more interesting to show all of the different colors that occur when light hits an object like water.

<sup>5</sup> By 1874, many different artists were painting in this new style, including Claude Monet. One of his paintings was titled *Impression: Sunrise*. A critic named Louis Leroy did not like these new artists. He thought their paintings looked unfinished. He used Monet's title to make fun of these painters by calling them "impressionists," meaning that they did not make real paintings, just sketches. The critics who liked these artists thought the word was just right. They began to use it in a positive way.

<sup>6</sup> Some of the other Impressionists were Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, Edgar Degas, and Mary Cassatt. They thought it was more important to paint *how* they saw things, instead of just *what* they saw. Other artists around the world felt that they could have this freedom as well. Because of the Impressionists, the art world was never the same.



*Regatta at Argenteuil* by Claude Monet



*Cliff Walk at Pourville* by Claude Monet