Evaluation of Text Complexity
New York State English Language Arts
Common Core Test

Released Passages from 2017

Anthony Cardinale
Third Grade Teacher
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Dear Educators and Parents,

The New York State Common Core Exams have been in place since the spring of 2013. I first became concerned with the developmental appropriateness of these assessments once the New York State Education Department listed *The Grey Hare* by Leo Tolstoy as a sample text for third graders on the Engage NY website. An analysis of this text using the Fry Readability Graph shows that it is written at a sixth grade level.

Educators have used the Fry Readability Graph to determine text complexity for over 40 years. In my 15 years as an elementary teacher, I have found its results to be accurate and consistent with widely used book-leveling systems such as the Fountas & Pinnell Guided Reading Levels and the Developmental Reading Assessment levels.

Using the Fry Readability Graph to evaluate the released passages from the 2017 Common Core English Language Arts exam, I have determined the following:

- three passages were written on a third grade level
- one passage was written on a fourth grade level
- two passages were written on a fifth grade level
- two passages were written on a sixth grade level

In my professional opinion, texts chosen for the purpose of evaluating the reading proficiency of elementary students should range from one grade level below to one grade level above the students being assessed. This range allows both struggling and accelerated readers the opportunity to demonstrate the skills they have learned throughout the year. When students are tasked with reading literature too far above developmentally appropriate levels, their answers to even the most carefully worded questions become unreliable. Educators have no way of knowing if their students misunderstood the passage or if they could not successfully execute the skills required to answer a given question.

It is my hope that the results shared in this document will continue to spark a conversation across New York that will lead to adjustments being made in our state's student testing program.

Sincerely,

Anthony Cardinale

Anthony Cardinale
Directions
Read this passage. Then answer questions 7 through 12.

Neil deGrasse Tyson is an astrophysicist. An astrophysicist uses science and math to study the universe.

Excerpt from Astrophysicist and Space Advocate
Neil deGrasse Tyson
by Marne Ventura

DISCOVERING THE NIGHT SKY

1 [The lights in the planetarium dimmed. Nine-year-old Neil sat in the darkness and stared up at the huge domed ceiling. The audience grew silent. A voice boomed, “We are now in the universe, and here are the stars.”]

2 It was Neil’s first visit to the Hayden Planetarium in New York City. He had seen the night sky many times from his home in the Bronx. He had seen a few stars and the moon. But tonight was different. On the ceiling above him, he saw countless stars, planets, and constellations—groups of stars that form shapes.

3 Not long after this, Neil and his family took a trip to Pennsylvania. Away from the lights of New York City, he was able to see the stars more clearly. He realized the stars he had seen on the planetarium ceiling were not just part of a show. They were real. He wanted to know more about them. Neil felt like the universe was calling him.

GROWING UP IN THE BRONX

4 [Neil deGrasse Tyson was born on October 5, 1958, in New York. He grew up in the Bronx in New York City. Neil lived with his parents, his older brother, and his younger sister in a tall building called the Skyview Apartments.]

#1 - 9.2 sent. 128 syllables
#2 - 8.1 sent. 130 syllables
#3 - 9.7 sent. 137 syllables

\[
\text{AVG} = \frac{128 + 130 + 137}{3} = 132 \text{ syllables}
\]

9 sentences
132 syllables
5th Grade

GO ON
Neil went to public school. He was an average student. He never had a teacher tell him that he was the best in the class or that he was going to go far. In fact, his third-grade teacher wrote a note on his report card. She said Neil should be more serious about his schoolwork.

**GETTING A BETTER LOOK**

After the family trip to Pennsylvania, a friend lent Neil a pair of binoculars. Neil went to the roof of his building and looked at the night sky through the binoculars. He was amazed to see craters—large, bowl-shaped holes—on the moon. He wanted to see more. When he was eleven, his parents bought him a telescope.

Soon Neil wanted a bigger telescope to learn more about astronomy. But a more powerful telescope cost two hundred dollars. Neil's parents didn't have a lot of extra money. So Neil started a business walking dogs for people who lived in his building.

He walked several dogs three times a day. Most days, he earned five dollars. He saved his money until he had enough to pay for half of the telescope he wanted. His parents paid for the other half.

Neil didn't stop walking dogs. He earned more money to buy a camera. He wanted to take photos of the stars and the planets he saw. At the age of eleven, Neil decided he would become an astrophysicist.

**LEARNING ABOUT THE UNIVERSE**

Neil learned more about the stars. In sixth grade, he took astronomy courses at the planetarium. He often took his telescope to the roof of his apartment to study the night sky. Sometimes police officers would come up to make sure everything was okay. They weren't used to seeing people using telescopes in the Bronx. They were curious. Neil helped them look through the lens. He pointed out Saturn's rings and talked about how pretty he thought they were.

When he was ready for high school, Neil chose the Bronx High School of Science. When he was fourteen, Neil went to space camp. He spent a month studying the stars and the planets. He worked with scientists and other young people. When he got back to New York, he gave a talk to fifty adults. He told them what he had learned. Neil's career as an astrophysicist had begun.
Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions 19 through 24.

Hayley has a talent. Just like her great-great aunt Ruby, who traveled around the country with a band called the Ragtime Rascals, Hayley plays the ukulele.

Excerpt from Ukulele Hayley

by Judy Cox

1. The day of the talent show, Hayley's stomach fluttered like a flock of baby birds. Was this how Ruby felt before a performance with her Ragtime Rascals?
2. Mom had helped Hayley make her costume. Black-and-white saddle shoes, a poodle skirt, blouse, and a scarf tied around her neck. Her hair, as usual, was a wild mop of red curls. She'd tried to pull it back in a ponytail, but it was coming loose already. Couldn't do anything about that!
3. There had been some rumors that the talent show would have to be canceled due to cutbacks. But somehow it had worked out, and now Hayley waited backstage, softly strumming her uke.
4. She'd practiced a lot. At the talent show tryouts, Mr. Y had given her a thumbs-up and told her that she was in. Dad and Mom had cheered.
5. "You'll bring the house down!" said Dad.
6. "What's that mean?" asked Tilly, anxiously looking at the ceiling. Mom laughed and hugged her.
7. "It means your big sis is going to be a star!"
8. Now Hayley peeked through the curtains to the front of the stage. There were a lot of acts. She watched Skeeter pull a rabbit out of a hat—or try to. The rabbit was a stuffed animal, and he dropped it twice before he finished. Being Skeeter, he didn't mind when the audience laughed. He bowed with a big flourish and dropped the rabbit again. This time, even Skeeter laughed.
Olivia was next. She wore a fluffy tutu and pink satin shoes. Hayley thought she twirled as gracefully as a real ballerina. Then two fifth grade girls danced to a popular song. Some fourth graders performed a silly skit. A kindergartner tried to recite a poem, got scared, and had to be helped off the stage by his teacher.

Finally, the MC announced Hayley. She walked out to the front of the stage. She stood in front of the mic the way Mr. Y told her to.

She looked out into the gym. All the kids in the school looked back. Her stomach flopped. Her knees knocked. Her head spun. Why had she ever thought this would be fun? She wanted to crawl back in bed. Forget the whole thing. Be little Hayley, the shrimp, again.

Then the spotlight came on. She took a deep breath, and suddenly all of her butterflies flew away. She grinned. She tossed her head, making her curls dance. Bring it on! She was ready!

She tucked her uke under her arm and strummed the first chord. "One, two, three o'clock!" she sang. "Four o'clock rock!" She played an old rock 'n' roll song from the fifties. She finished by swinging her arm in a big circle like a guitar hero. Just the way she'd practiced.

The gym erupted with applause and cheers. She was a shining star!
The talent show made Hayley a celebrity. Well, not a celebrity exactly, but at least famous. Maybe not famous. Make that sort of well-known.

Kids kept coming up and telling her how cool she was. “Can we join your band?” they asked.

“But I don’t have a band,” she said.

“Start one,” Skeeter advised.

“Okay,” said Hayley. “Anyone who wants to be in my band, get a ukulele, and I’ll teach you to play.”
Directions
Read this passage. Then answer questions 25 through 31.

Excerpt from Tiger in Trouble!
And More True Stories of Amazing Animal Rescues
by Kelly Milner Halls

After two days, Nitro was finally getting better. He was hungry. He even started to walk around his cage. But Kathryn noticed something strange.

Three of the four walls of the cage were made of concrete. The fourth wall was made of chain link. Most animals faced the chain-link wall. They like to watch what is going on outside of their cages. Nitro did not.

“He would sit and stare at the concrete walls,” Kathryn said. “And when he did turn toward our voices, he would follow the sound of our voices. But not our movements.”

Kathryn knew this meant one thing: Nitro was blind.

Nitro’s New Life
Now that he was healthy, Nitro was ready for his new cage. But he couldn’t see it. His owner in Kansas had never noticed Nitro was blind. That cage had been so small, Nitro had been able to memorize every inch. So, he may not have seemed blind.

Why was Nitro blind? That’s hard to tell.

Kathryn ruled out a brain injury. And there were no scars around Nitro’s eyes that might mean he had an injury. “We just don’t know what caused his condition,” Kathryn said.

Here’s what they did know. The caretakers at the Rescue had a big challenge ahead of them. They had to help a blind tiger find his way, without the use of his eyes.

#1 - 12.3 sent., 127 syllables
#2 - 10.2 sent., 119 syllables
#3 - 11.4 sent., 135 syllables

Avg -> 10.4 sentences 127 syllables
Third Grade

#4 - 7.5 sent., 125 syllables
Nitro walked through his big new home. He reached out with huge six-inch paws. He was trying to feel what was ahead of him. He did not know where things were around him. Not a twig, not a path, not a feeding dish.

He was a little afraid. He could never tell when he was getting close to running into the fence.

"He was roughing up his nose, because he would walk right up to the fence and hit it," Kathryn said. "We kept thinking, 'you have to slow down.'"But how do you teach a blind tiger how to find a fence he cannot see?

"We decided to start marking the fence with peppermint," Kathryn explained. "He would know when he smelled it, he should slow down. The peppermint marked the borders of his space."

Once he learned where his fences were, the people at the Rescue put down sand pathways. The sand pathways led to Nitro's food, water, and his cozy den.

When Nitro felt sand under his paws, he knew he would end up in one of those areas. When Nitro felt leaves, dirt, and twigs, he knew he was not heading in the right direction.

In time, Nitro learned where every bump, every tree, and every food box was in his new cage. When he did, the sand and the peppermint could be put away. Nitro was finally home.

Caretakers noticed a big change in Nitro. He mastered his space. He couldn't see people. But he knew where they were, even if they stood perfectly still.

He shuffled in their direction to get them to answer. He wanted to hear if he knew their voices. He wanted to know who they were.

Nitro, the blind tiger, has become a Rescue favorite. Volunteers guide people through Carolina Tiger Rescue once a week. They never miss a stop at Nitro's cage. They tell his story and give him little treats (scraps of chicken or beef). Nitro never disappoints.

"He has a great attitude," Kathryn says. "Things haven't been easy for him. But he still comes up to the fence happily chuffing."

DID YOU KNOW?
What's a chuffle? It's the sound a tiger makes when it sees or smells a friend. It sounds like a purr with a tiny cough.

GO ON
Book 2
Page 3
Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions 32 and 33.

Raj is used to being the speed-math champion of his fourth-grade class. But during this week's quiz, the division problems slowed him down and his pencil tip broke. He is nervous as he waits for his teacher, Ms. Evans, to announce who is this week's champion.

Excerpt from

Speed-Math Champ of 4B
by Sara Matson

1 But after Ms. Evans collected the papers, she made an announcement. “We have a new speed-math champion this week.” She smiled at the new girl, who'd been in class for only three days, “Congratulations, Caroline, As for the rest of you, keep practicing.”

2 Raj shook his head. He didn’t need to practice. Next Friday, he’d sharpen two pencils. Then the title would be his again.

3 During the next week, Raj couldn’t help noticing that Caroline was good at math. She raised her hand a lot, and her answers were always right. Once, when Ms. Evans demonstrated a new kind of division, Caroline already knew how to do it.

4 But that doesn't mean she'll beat me again, Raj told himself.

5 On Friday afternoon, he was ready.

6 “Begin!” Ms. Evans said.

7 Raj’s answers rushed out like water from a faucet.

8 \[ \begin{align*}
9 + 8 &= 17 \\
16 - 8 &= 8 \\
4 \times 9 &= 36 \\
63 + 7 &= 9
\end{align*} \]

9 As he neared the bottom of the paper, his heart beat faster. Maybe he would even finish early!

#1 - 11.5 sent., 137 syllables
#2 - 12.0 sent., 130 syllables
#3 - 14.9 sent., 123 syllables
#4 - 9.8 sent., 139 syllables

Average 12.1 sentences
132 syllables

GO ON
He groaned when his teacher called time. *I had just five problems left,* he thought.

It seemed to take forever for Ms. Evans to read off the answers. Finally, he got his paper back. At the top: a big purple 76—his best score ever.

He nudged Joel. "Watch out, Caroline," he whispered, pointing at his quiz. "Here comes the new champ."

But for the second week in a row, Raj wasn’t the winner.

"Good job, Caroline," Ms. Evans said, smiling. "A 75! Looks as if the others are going to have to work harder to beat you."

After the bell rang, Raj crumpled up his quiz and shoved it into his desk. That Caroline! Barging into 4B and taking over the speed-math quiz. Well, she’d better watch out, because from now on, he was going to practice his math like crazy. Then he’d reign as champion again.

He started on Monday. Addition problems during breakfast, Subtraction while he brushed his teeth, Multiplication on the bus, and division during his after-school snack. Plus, every night before he went to bed, he took a practice quiz. As the week went on, he did better and better.

Even so, when he saw his score in class on Friday—a 79—he didn’t feel as sure of winning as he had before. Maybe Caroline had gotten an 80.

While Ms. Evans paged through the corrected papers, Raj watched her face. Had his work paid off?

"Our champion has changed this week," she said at last. She looked at Raj and smiled. "Congratulations, Raj. You’ve really improved."

The bell rang, and Joel slapped him on the back, "You sure showed Caroline, didn’t you?" he whispered. "I’ll bet she..."

He trailed off. Caroline was standing right in front of Raj’s desk. "Good job on the quiz," she said.

"Thanks," Raj replied. Then he added, "You, too—I mean, winning the past two weeks. I thought you were going to beat me again today."

Caroline shrugged. "At my old school, I was the best at math, so I always won. It’s fun to have some competition here. It makes math more exciting."

Fun? Exciting? Raj stared at her. What was fun about losing?
"Are you going to try to win the title back next Friday?" he asked.

"Of course." She patted her backpack and smiled. "I've got my flashcards right here."

"I've got mine, too," he said quickly, pulling them out of his desk.

"Great!" she said. "Well, see you Monday. And good luck, champ."

Raj grinned at the teasing. Maybe math was more fun this way. "Yeah, See you Monday, Caroline."
Strike Three! YOU’RE OUT!

by Jo Dewitt

Jackie Mitchell was born in 1914, at a time when women were not accepted in professional baseball. Jackie dreamed of becoming a great pitcher. She had been taught to pitch by baseball star Dazzy Vance when she was a young girl and trained with future major league players in Atlanta.

About that time in history, one of the great hitters of baseball, Babe Ruth, made a statement, “I don’t know what’s going to happen if they begin to let women in baseball. Of course, they will never make good. Why? Because they are too delicate.”

Jackie didn’t buy that. Soon after, Jackie signed with the Chattanooga Lookouts, a minor league baseball team. Manager Bert Niehoff spoke to the press and promised to help Jackie become a pitcher in the major leagues. Jackie was thinking about the immediate. The New York Yankees were coming to town, and the Lookouts were scheduled to play them in a pre-season exhibition game. Maybe she would get a chance to pitch against the greatest home-run hitter in the world, Babe Ruth.

The day of the game arrived, and it was pouring rain. The game was cancelled. The next day, Thursday, April 2, 1931, the rain stopped, and the game was about to start. Jackie was not sure how she should pitch to the Yankees, but she remembered what her father had told her. He said, “Go out there and pitch just like you pitch to anyone else.”

Jackie had an uncanny ability to guess the weakness of a batter. She could put both speed and curve on the ball. She had one pitch that no one could hit—a wicked, dropping curve ball. As Babe Ruth stepped to the plate for batting practice Jackie watched him closely, deciding how she would pitch to him.

Manager Niehoff put Clyde Barfoot in as the starting pitcher. After the first two Yankee batters got base hits and scored a run, Niehoff motioned for Jackie to come onto the field.
She waved Babe Ruth to the mound. She wound up and pitched. The ball was high. “Ball one,” yelled the umpire. Jackie’s next pitch was a curve ball, which curved and dropped when it reached the plate. Babe swung. “STRIKE ONE!” the umpire yelled. Jackie decided to give him a fastball, shoulder high. Jackie pitched, Babe swung. “STRIKE TWO!”

Jackie was feeling more confident. The next pitch was high, and Babe stopped his swing. But the ball dropped, going right over the plate. “STRIKE THREE! YOU’RE OUT!” yelled the umpire. Jackie had struck out the mighty Babe Ruth!

Next at the plate was Lou Gehrig, who was also a left-handed batter and a home-run hitter. Jackie decided on a pitch that most batters had trouble with—inside and just above his waist. She pitched, and Gehrig swung. Whoosh! Three times—Whoosh! She had struck out the Yankees’ two best hitters! The crowd went wild.

A few days after this exhibition game, Baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis voided Jackie Mitchell’s contract, claiming that baseball was “too strenuous” for a woman.

Although Jackie Mitchell did not have the same opportunities as men had in the game of baseball, Jackie Mitchell will always be remembered for her spirit and her determination as well as her talent. She is still remembered as “the girl who struck out Babe Ruth.”
Directions
Read this passage. Then answer questions 35 and 36.

Back to the Future
by Terri L. Jones

1. What will the future bring? To answer that question, you need to know what is possible. You also need imagination.


Home, Sweet Robot

3. In the 1950s, a science fiction book described an amazing house. It was a house of the future. Robots did all the chores. They cooked and cleaned. They set the table and vacuumed.

4. Today, robots really are on the job. They vacuum floors, cook meals and build cars. Robots are even exploring outer space.

5. Disneyland had a “smart” house, too. The house almost ran itself. Today, many homes are run by automatic controls. Microwaves can cook meals in just minutes.

Cities in Space

6. Some ideas from the past were out of this world. How does a city in space sound? Some people thought we would live on the moon by the 1990s!

7. How would this work? Well, people would use hydroponics to grow their food. That means the plants would grow without soil. Energy from the sun would supply power.

8. Today, astronauts do live in a space station. They stay only a few months at a time, though. Some farms grow plants without soil. Many homes on Earth use power from the sun. But a city in space is still many years away.

Phone + TV = Future

9. People had telephones and television in the fifties. A clever writer put the two together!
Dick Tracy was a comic book character. He used his watch as a phone. The watch also let him see people while he talked to them. In real life, no one had a watch like Tracy's.

Today, many people watch videos on their cell phones. People use webcams to see each other on the Internet. What was only in stories 50 years ago is really possible today!

**Up, Up, But Not Away**

Some people don't just imagine the future. They try to build it. Take the jetpack. This is a backpack with a small rocket engine. You put the pack on. You rev it up. Then you take off!

The jetpack isn't as great as it seems. It can't carry very much fuel. So it can't go very far. Also, the fuel is dangerous. It gets very, very hot! And the pack's loud engine can hurt your ears.

Still, a jetpack is a fun idea. Maybe one day someone will make the pack work. Until that time, you better count on the bus.

**Getting from Here to There**

Another cool idea was the flying car. It had wings. The car really worked! Flying cars didn't completely catch on. Maybe they were hard to park.

In one science fiction story, people jumped on moving belts to get around. That wasn't such a crazy idea. Today "people movers" carry travelers through airports. Escalators carry people up and down. There are even moving sidewalks in some places.

People in the 1950s dreamed of a car that drove itself. Today, the car is still a dream. But in time, that dream may come true, too.

**Fast Forward**

In 1950, the only computers were very big. Each one filled a whole room! No one had a personal computer. Then someone invented the computer chip. The tiny chip let engineers build small computers. Now, millions of people have their own computer at home.

The future of the fifties is here. Think about your future.
Reading Passage: Balancing Rocks

By Stacy A. Nyikos

Have you ever tried standing on your head? Chances are, the first time you did, you fell down. It may even have taken a while to master this upside-down balancing act. Artist Sepp Bögle has a balancing act of a different nature. He balances rocks. He wasn’t always a rock balancer. “I was a cook, and then a salesman, before I began to balance rocks,” he says.

Years ago, Bögle and his daughter moved to a small town on the shores of Lake Constance in Germany. Bögle was sitting on a bench near the water one day, watching someone stack rocks on their flat sides. He decided to try it. It was easy—too easy. “I thought, What if I turn them on their pointy ends? Will they stand?” he says.

Incredibly, they did. “I’ve been doing it ever since,” says Bögle.

The Last Tree

Bögle still lives and works in the small German town of Radolfzell where he and his daughter moved all those years ago. His studio is under the very last tree along a boardwalk called the Mole.
Tourists travel from all over Germany and other European countries to see the artist at work. Some come to figure out his trick. Bögle smiles at the doubters. "There is no trick, not like what they mean. I don't use glue or hidden supports. I listen to the rocks."

That may sound strange, but the truth is that humans do this kind of "listening" all the time. When a baby tries to sit up for the first time, it's a balancing act. The brain has to combine information from the eyes, the muscles, and the balancing system of the inner ear to figure out how to keep the body upright. Balancing takes a lot of practice. Babies often spend at least six months practicing before they can sit up without falling over.

A similar but simpler feat is balancing a ruler on one finger. If either side is too long, the ruler will fall to the ground. The key is finding the point where the weight of each side of the ruler is equal. This spot is called the center of gravity. When you find it, the ruler rests on your finger in perfect balance.

A Balancing Act

Balancing rocks, as Bögle does, is harder. But why? A ruler offers clues. The center of gravity should be halfway along the length of the ruler—near the 6-inch mark on a 12-inch ruler.

In the rocks that Bögle balances, the center of gravity is much harder to find. These rocks can be shaped like lopsided eggs or pears and often have funny knobs, big bulges, or craggy points. The center of gravity is somewhere inside the rock. No marks show where to find it. And if the point on the end of the rock is small, it's hard to center the weight of the rock.

In addition, since Bögle balances many rocks on top of one another, the combined weight of the rocks has to be evenly balanced over the point the bottom rock stands on. It's like acrobats balancing one on top of the other. If their combined weight isn't perfectly balanced over the person standing on the ground, they'll topple over.

To balance the rocks, Bögle tries again and again. He uses spüren ("sense" or "feel" in German). He says he "listens" to the rocks and lets the rocks "tell" him how to balance them. He says for him, it's a kind of meditation.

For the visitors who journey to the last tree on the Mole, the balanced rocks are a wondrous sight to see.
Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions 39 and 40.

Cara has the chicken pox and needs to stay with her great-grandmother because her regular babysitter cannot care for sick children. Cara is worried about spending time with Great-grandmother because she can be very old-fashioned, and she rarely smiles.

Excerpt from
The Remembrance Quilt
by Kathleen Anne Butler

1. Soon after the front door closed behind Aunt Liz, Great-grandmother came into Cara’s room supported on a cane and peering over her bifocals. “So, you’re sick!” was all she said. Then Great-grandmother slowly went to the closet and pulled out a quilt, which she brought to Cara’s bed. “When your mother was a little girl, she always wanted the fan quilt and a story when she was sick. Maybe you’d like the same.”

2. Cara, too surprised to say anything, lay still as Great-grandmother unfolded the colorful fan quilt and carefully spread it over Cara, covering up all the homework.

3. “It is beautiful,” Cara finally managed to say. “Is it old? Did my mother really sleep under it? Did she have the chickenpox, too?”

4. Cara was startled when Great-grandmother laughed. “Yes to all of your questions,” she said, as she eased herself onto a chair near Cara’s bed.

5. “I was born in the old country, you know,” started Great-grandmother. Cara listened eagerly as the old woman continued. “My grandmother, whom I called Farmor, was a very successful weaver. She raised her own flax, spun it, dyed it, and wove it into beautiful pieces of cloth. She worked at her loom many hours every day. I can still hear the sound of the wooden treadles and the beater pushing woof threads firmly into the warp.”

6. Great-grandmother stopped and looked at the quilt as if in a dream. Finally, Cara said, “What are woof and warp?”

#1 - 5.9 sent., 137 syllables
#2 - 7.6 sent., 123 syllables
#3 - 7.6 sent., 131 syllables

Average: 7 sentences
132 syllables

GO ON
Great-grandmother smiled, looking now at Cara's face. "The warp is the string that is strung on the loom. The woof is the yarn woven between the threads of warp." She held a corner of the quilt to show Cara where red and green yarn had been woven between the white warp threads.

"People from all over the country came to buy Farmor's cloth, it was so fine. One day Papa told Farmor that he, Mama, my sister, and I would be leaving for America. Farmor cried. I cried too, because somehow I knew I would never see her again. I'd never see the beautiful cloth she wove or hear the beating of her busy loom again.

"So I did something very bad. I went into Farmor's weaving room the night before we left for America. I took a pair of scissors and snipped a scrap from every bolt on her shelves! No one knew I did it; they were all so busy packing for our journey. I rolled the scraps of material into a small bundle and packed them in the bottom of my own little trunk."

"Many weeks later, at our new home in America, I unpacked my precious scraps of cloth." Tears were glistening on Great-grandmother's cheeks now. "When Papa and Mama discovered what I had done, they were very angry at first. They made me write an apology to Farmor. But then Mama helped me make this remembrance quilt out of all the scraps I had taken. Every time I take it out, even after all these years, I can see Farmor. I think she would have been happy to know I have such lovely memories of her."

Great-grandmother dabbed a handkerchief to her eyes. Cara sat very still, thinking. Then she slid her hand out from under the quilt and shyly reached for Great-grandmother's soft white hand. "Thank you for telling me the story," she whispered. It was nice to know Great-grandmother had been a little girl like her once.