

Fiction

A DAY IN ANCIENT ROME



by Clara Strongfoot

illustrated by Jonas Sickler

Mc
Graw
Hill

PAIRED
READ

Poetry

STRATEGIES & SKILLS

Comprehension

Strategy: Summarize

Skill: Point of View

Vocabulary

create, dazzling,
imagination, seconds

Phonics

r-controlled vowel syllables

Vocabulary Strategy

Metaphors

Word count: 1203



Education

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Essential Question

Where can your imagination take you?



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READ**

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JOURNEY BACK IN TIME

All week, Mrs. Palmer had been hinting about a special project. At last, the time had come to find out what it was. “I hope everyone is ready for a big adventure,” Mrs. Palmer grinned. Then she turned on the whiteboard.

Grace leaned over to her friend Lila and whispered, “I love when she uses the whiteboard to show us places. It’s like we’re really there!” Lila didn’t respond. She looked bored.

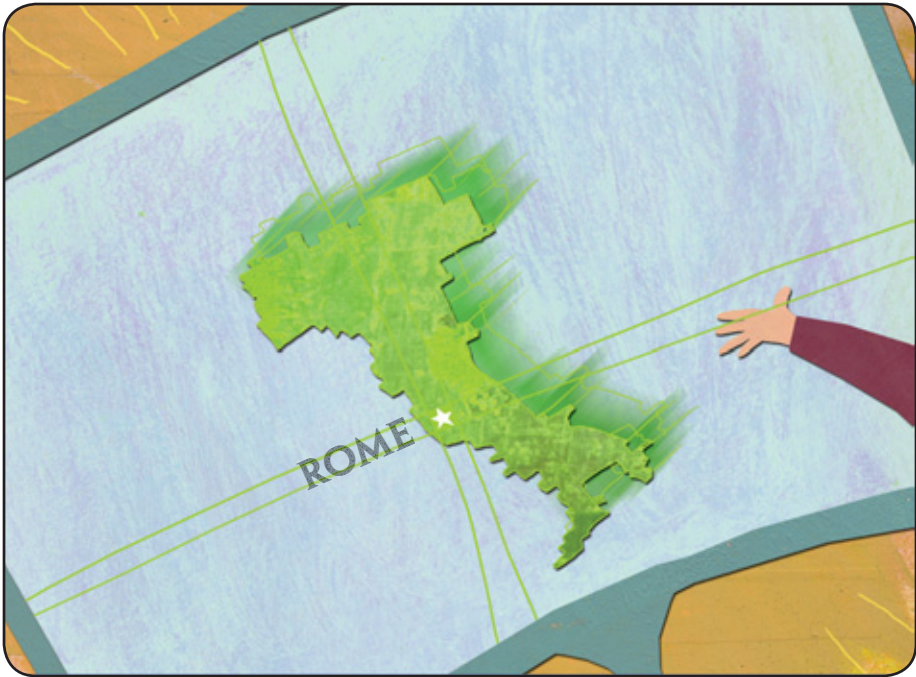




“Prepare to travel back in time to ancient Europe.” Mrs. Palmer’s booming voice sent a shiver of excitement through the classroom. “Feel how we bounce up and down on the waves as we cross the ocean! Taste the salty sea air!”

Mrs. Palmer knew how to create the perfect mood, and Grace’s imagination sparked to life. Grace leaned forward in her chair. She didn’t want to miss a thing.

A map of the world appeared on the big screen. Grace recognized some of the places on the map.



Mrs. Palmer touched the screen and the map zoomed in to show a boot-shaped country in Europe. Grace recognized that it was Italy. Then Mrs. Palmer touched a star labeled *Rome* that was near the center of the boot.

Suddenly, the map disappeared and was replaced by a drawing of five men in long white togas. The words *Ancient Rome* appeared at the top of the screen.

“I wonder who those men are,” thought Grace. “Or, actually, who they *were*.”



For the first time, Grace thought about what life was like so long ago. She stared at the picture on the large screen. “I know it’s just a drawing, but they look so real,” she marveled. “They look as though they’re in the middle of a very important conversation!”

“Could they be talking about sports or their families?” Grace wondered. Their faces were lit up with so much excitement and feeling. She could almost see their hands moving wildly as they talked.



Mrs. Palmer went on to explain, “Ancient Rome is famous for its architecture, but it was also known for a variety of art forms. The Romans enjoyed discussing art, literature, and music.”

Grace always liked to listen when her parents talked about music and books. “I wish I could listen to the conversation these men were having,” she thought.

Grace closed her eyes and imagined that she was standing at the edge of their group. She could almost hear their deep voices echoing off the streets.

GRACE'S ADVENTURE

When Grace opened her eyes, a dazzling light startled her. The sunlight was bright fireworks that bounced off broad white columns. She stood with Roman men in front of a huge, round stone arena.

“What just happened?” Grace asked herself. She turned all the way around in a circle. She was no longer looking at ancient Rome on a screen in her classroom. She was there, in the middle of it!





“Am I dreaming?” she wondered. “Maybe I should pinch myself to find out.” But Grace did not pinch herself. She wanted to stay here as long as possible!

Suddenly, Grace heard cheering coming from inside the arena. “I wonder what they’re cheering about,” she thought. She hurried in to check out what was happening.



Grace had never seen so many people in one place before. The enormous crowd cheered as two gladiators battled in the arena. Then she heard Mrs. Palmer's voice. "This arena could seat 45,000 people. But many more than that could watch the event as long as they did not mind standing."

Grace scanned the arena for Mrs. Palmer. Maybe her teacher had somehow traveled along with her. But Grace did not see Mrs. Palmer anywhere. Then, in a flash, the arena disappeared!



“What is going on?” Grace asked herself, as the arena was replaced by a big, beautiful fountain in a large square. She had no answer.

Once again, Grace heard Mrs. Palmer’s voice explaining the scene in front of her. “Ancient Romans didn’t have running water in their homes. They filled jugs at public fountains like this one. The water was cool and refreshing. Some people even believed that it could cure illness.”

“What a beautiful fountain!” Grace thought. “But I’m really glad to be living in a time where I can turn on a faucet to get water.”

A LAST LOOK AT ROME

Grace noticed that two kids were throwing coins in the fountain. “Why are they doing that?” she wondered.

As if on cue, Mrs. Palmer’s voice returned. “Travelers often tossed coins in the fountain. They believed it would make their wishes come true.”

That gave Grace an idea. She checked her pockets and found a coin. “I’m going to try it,” she thought as she tossed the coin in the fountain. But as soon as the coin hit the water, the fountain began to disappear.





Grace watched as the fountain was replaced by a huge stone temple. “I have no idea what this structure is,” she thought.

Luckily, Grace heard Mrs. Palmer’s voice again. “This is the Grand Pantheon, which was dedicated to all the Roman gods,” she explained. “Please note that the dome was made with concrete—a Roman invention. Look closely at the style of this building. It is still copied today and used to make buildings all over the world.”



Grace looked carefully at the building. Now that she thought about it, the Grand Pantheon reminded her of some other buildings she had seen before. But of course, those buildings were much smaller.

Grace looked around and spotted a family nearby. They were enjoying a midday meal at a large table. They waved at her to join them. “That’s so nice of them!” Grace thought.



Grace suddenly realized how hungry she was. As she sat down, a gigantic plate of spaghetti appeared before her. “Yum!” she said, and eagerly wolfed it down.

Seconds later, more pasta magically appeared on her plate. Grace thought she heard Mrs. Palmer’s voice in the distance, but she was too hungry to pay attention.

Someone passed more food around the table, and Grace smiled. Just as she reached for the platter, Grace heard a church bell chime. Then she heard someone calling her name.



“Grace!” an impatient voice startled her. It was Lila. “Didn’t you hear the bell? It’s time to go to lunch!”

Grace blinked her eyes and looked around the classroom. She wasn’t sure what had really happened, but there was no point in missing lunch because of it. Hopefully, Ancient Rome would be waiting for her when she returned.

Respond to Reading

Summarize

Use the chart to help you summarize *A Day in Ancient Rome*.

Character	Clues	Point of View

Text Evidence:

1. Is *A Day in Ancient Rome* fiction or nonfiction? How do you know? **GENRE**
2. What is Grace's point of view about the new social studies lesson? Include details from the story. **POINT OF VIEW**
3. What is the metaphor on page 7? **METAPHORS**
4. Write about how Grace uses her imagination in school. **WRITE ABOUT READING**

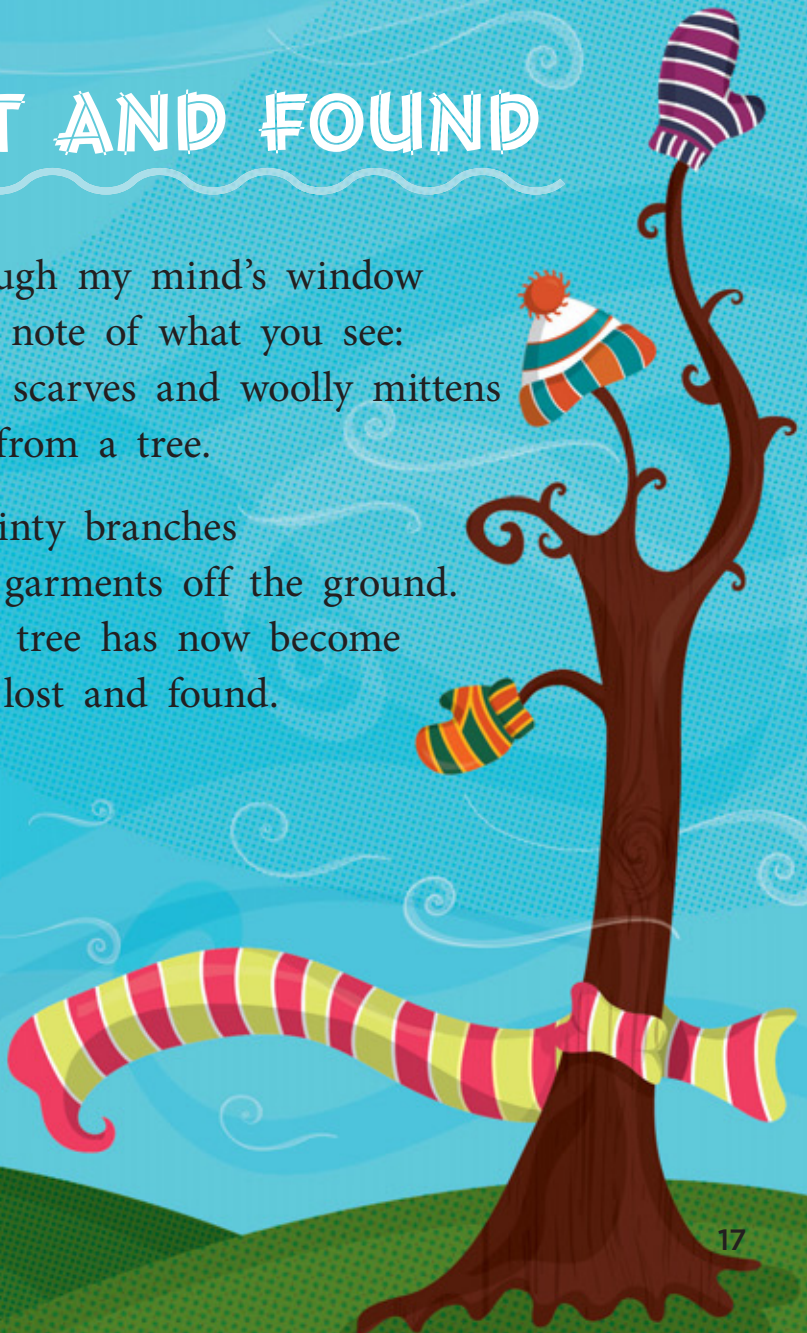
Compare Texts

Now read some poems about where your imagination can take you.

LOST AND FOUND

Peer through my mind's window
And take note of what you see:
Caps and scarves and woolly mittens
Hanging from a tree.

Sharp, pointy branches
Keep the garments off the ground.
A leafless tree has now become
A winter lost and found.



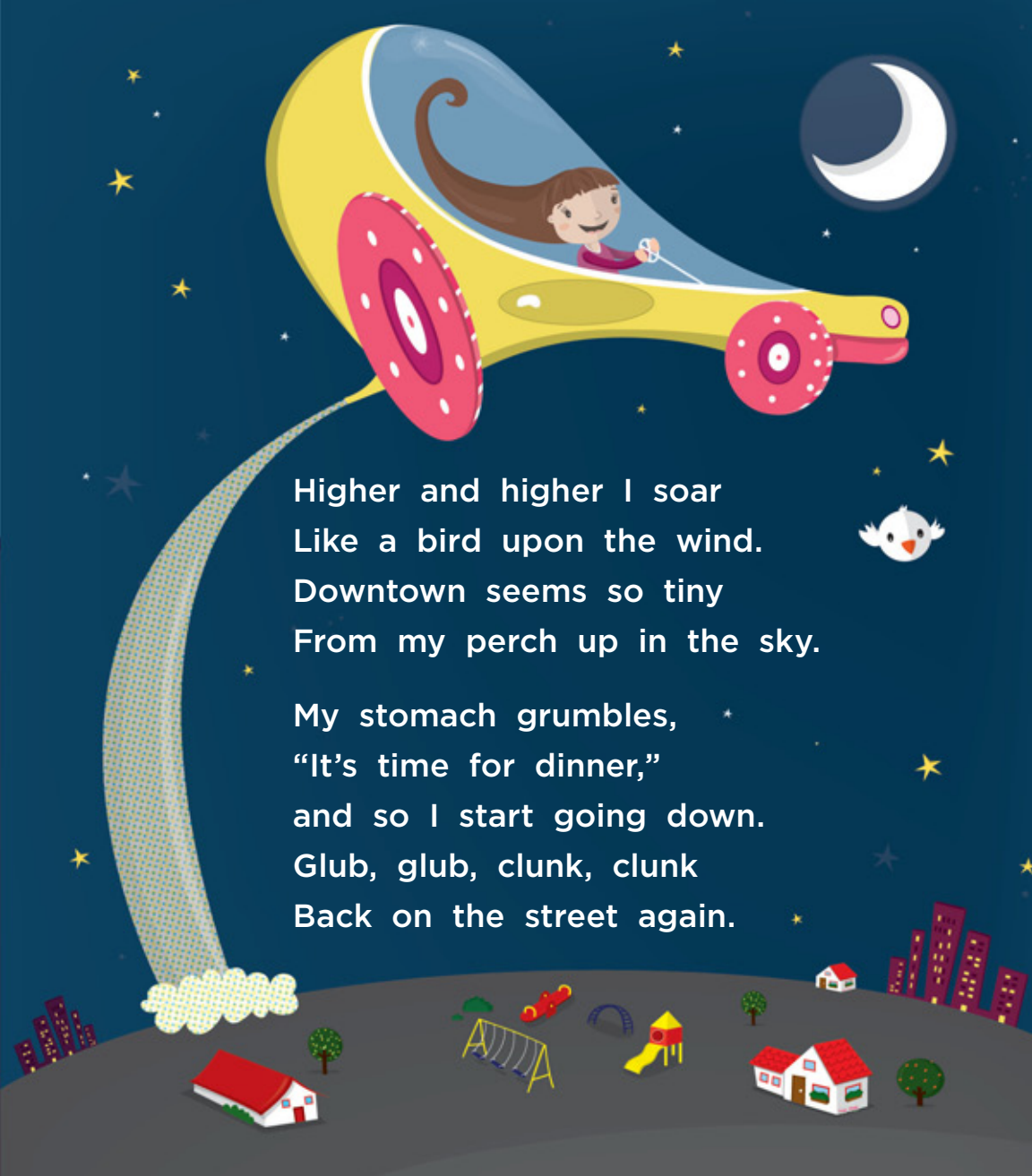


My Magic Car

Click. Whir, whir, chug chug chug
VROOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

My magic car roars to life
And hovers over the street.

Down the driveway
and past the park,
My car glides smoothly
Like a sailboat on the sea.



Higher and higher I soar
Like a bird upon the wind.
Downtown seems so tiny
From my perch up in the sky.

My stomach grumbles,
“It’s time for dinner,”
and so I start going down.
Glub, glub, clunk, clunk
Back on the street again.



Make Connections

How can using your imagination help you learn?

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do the story and poems show people using their imagination? **TEXT TO TEXT**

Focus on Literary Elements

Dialogue Dialogue is what a character in a story says. Looking at dialogue can help you understand a character's point of view.

What to Look for As you read a story, look for quotation marks: “ ”. They show where dialogue begins and ends. Look at this example from the story:

“Prepare to travel across the ocean and back in time to ancient Europe.”

Your Turn

Write a story with characters and dialogue. Write about where a character's imagination takes him or her. Make sure you use quotation marks around the words each character says. Include illustrations in your story.

Fiction

Thinkmark

Setting

Where did *A Day in Ancient Rome* take place?

What time of day did *A Day in Ancient Rome* take place?

Characters

How would you describe the main character in *A Day in Ancient Rome*?

Sequence of Events

What happened **first, then, next,** and **last** in *A Day in Ancient Rome*?

Make Connections

Think of a time when you used your imagination to help you learn. How was your experience similar to and different from Grace's experience?