

About the FREE Paired Passage Center

This free reading center includes two paired passages. Both passages are about Mardi Gras. One is an informational text, and the other is a fiction story that takes place during Mardi Gras.

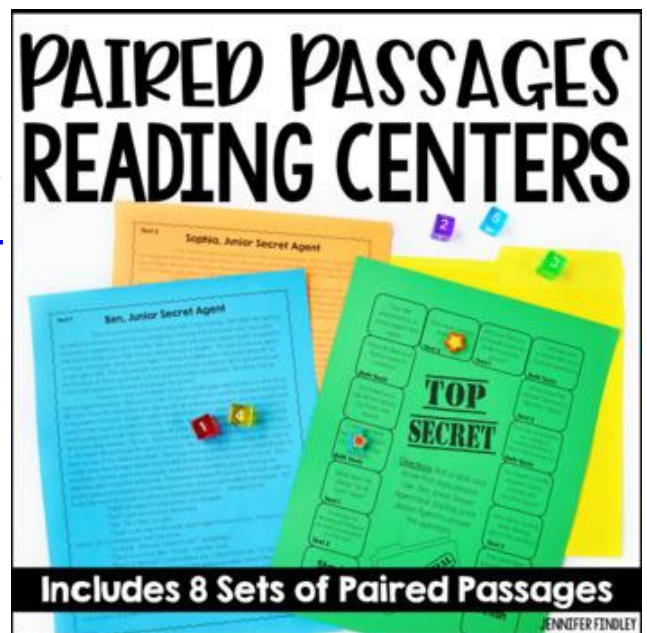
The reading center also includes 12 questions written on task cards. There are questions for each individual text and then paired text questions. The questions are labeled according to which texts are needed to answer them. An answer key with example answers is included.

Options for Use

Option 1: Print out the passages, and give them to the students at the beginning of the week. Have the students read the passages prior to going to the center. Then when they come to the center, they are ready to answer the questions. The passages could even be read as a whole group or sent home for homework.

Option 2: This option works well if the students will have a chance to go to the center three times a week. On the first day or two, students will read the passages and discuss them. On the second or third days, the students can answer the questions on the task cards.

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Text 1

Many think Mardi Gras is strictly a New Orleans holiday. It's true that New Orleans has the most famous Mardi Gras celebration. It includes a wild parade with crazy floats and costumes. It's also true that Mardi Gras has been a Louisiana state holiday since 1875. However, Mardi Gras has been around much longer than that. It's celebrated in many places throughout the world.

Mardi Gras is French for "Fat Tuesday". The holiday started in Europe. It began as a celebration the night before Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is the first day of the Christian season of Lent. During Lent, Christians are supposed to avoid bad habits. This includes partying and eating decadent foods. As far back as medieval times, Fat Tuesday was a day to have fun and feast before Lent arrived.

Mardi Gras came to America in the 1700s. Mardi Gras parades became popular in the 1800s. Those riding Mardi Gras floats usually toss items to the crowd. The most common items are candy, fake coins, and beaded necklaces. The necklaces usually come in the three "official" Mardi Gras colors. These are gold, purple, and green.

Another popular event of Mardi Gras is the masquerade ball. Partygoers attend these in masks and costumes. Many people also hold "king cake" parties. A king cake is a sugary cake. The cake has a plastic baby baked inside, although a real or plastic bean is sometimes used instead. If you get the piece of cake with the plastic baby or the bean, you're supposedly promised good fortune for the year. However, you also win the responsibility of buying next year's cake.



Text 2

I'm not competitive by nature, but I was pretty upset that I didn't get any beads. I always get beads. I feel like maybe they weren't throwing as many this year. There seemed to be more candy and coins than beads. I hadn't worn any beads from last year. Why would I? I always get new ones! However, every time any beads came my direction, somebody taller would snatch them away. When we regrouped after the parade, my friends Taylor and Jill both had at least five beaded necklaces. Maybe I had just been standing in the wrong spot. Whatever the reason, I felt like the only person in New Orleans with a bare neck.

Both Taylor and Jill offered me some of theirs, but I refused. You shouldn't wear beads you didn't snatch yourself. Grampa Boudreaux taught me that, and he always held me to it. That's how I got good at catching my own beads. It's why, despite my lack of height, I've always gotten plenty!

Jill could see that I was a bit in the dumps. She suggested that we go to our friend Jimmy's king cake party. I figured that a big sugary slab of cake could only help my mood, so we headed over. They were just cutting the cake when we arrived. A piece was thrust in my hands, and I dug in. Lo and behold, I found the plastic baby inside! Just as I was pulling it out from the cake, Burrow, Jimmy's puppy, grabbed it in his mouth. He took off with it! Everyone laughed and said that I would still get my lucky year. It sure hasn't been my lucky day!



What does Mardi
Gras mean in
English?

TEXT 1

1

How did Mardi
Gras begin?

TEXT 1

2

What do people
wear to
masquerade balls?

TEXT 1

3

What is a king
cake?

TEXT 1

4

Why is the narrator
upset?

TEXT 2

5

Find evidence from the
story that the narrator
has celebrated Mardi
Gras before.

TEXT 2

6

What happened to the plastic baby that the narrator found in the cake?

TEXT 2

7

Explain the connection between the two texts.

BOTH TEXTS

8

Find evidence from both texts that tells the reader what objects are thrown during Mardi Gras parades.

BOTH TEXTS

9

According to the details from text 1, the beads that the narrator's friends received were most likely what colors?

BOTH TEXTS

10

Find evidence from both texts that the narrator will be lucky after finding the plastic baby in the king cake.

BOTH TEXTS

11

According to the details from text 1, what will the narrator have to do the next year since he or she found the plastic baby?

BOTH TEXTS

12

RECORDING SHEET

Name: _____ Date: _____

	Question	Answer
1	What does Mardi Gras mean in English?	
2	How did Mardi Gras begin?	
3	What do people wear to masquerade balls?	
4	What is a king cake?	
5	Why is the narrator upset?	
6	Find evidence from the story that the narrator has celebrated Mardi Gras before.	

RECORDING SHEET

Name: _____ Date: _____

	Question	Answer
7	What happened to the plastic baby that the narrator found in the cake?	
8	Explain the connection between the two texts.	
9	Find evidence from both texts that tells the reader what objects are thrown during Mardi Gras parades.	
10	According to the details from text 1, the beads that the narrator's friends received were most likely what colors?	
11	Find evidence from both texts that the narrator will be lucky after finding the plastic baby in the king cake.	
12	According to the details from text 1, what will the narrator have to do the next year since he or she found the plastic baby?	

ANSWER KEY

	Example Answer
1	Mardi Gras is a French phrase that means “Fat Tuesday”.
2	Mardi Gras began because people had fun and ate feasts before Lent, which was a time to avoid bad habits.
3	People wear masks and costumes to masquerade balls.
4	A king cake is a sugary cake with a plastic baby or bean inside.
5	The narrator is upset because he or she did not get any beads.
6	“I hadn’t worn any beads from last year. Why would I?” “That’s how I got good at catching my own beads.”
7	Burrow, the puppy, grabbed the plastic baby and ran off.
8	The connection between the texts is the holiday of Mardi Gras. The first text is an informational text that gives details about the holiday. The second text is a fiction story in which the narrator is celebrating Mardi Gras.
9	Text 1: “Those riding Mardi Gras floats usually toss items to the crowd. The most common are candy, fake coins, and beaded necklaces.” Text 2: “There seemed to be more candy and coins than beads.”
10	The beads were most likely gold, purple, and green.
11	Text 1: “If you get the piece of cake with the plastic baby or the bean, you’re supposedly promised good fortune for the year.” Text 2: “Everyone laughed and said that I would still get my lucky year.”
12	According to text 1, the narrator will have to buy next year’s cake.

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