

Title:	Camping at Whispering Woods	Author:	Margaret S. Frezon
Genre:	Narrative	Est. Grade Level:	4
Word Count:	380	Lexile:	450

Notes:

KAMM reading passages and items were designed to facilitate students’ ability to demonstrate their grade-level content knowledge and skills, as specified in the state’s indicators, by minimizing or removing the effects of processing or physical challenges related to the students’ disabilities, without significant alteration of the assessed construct. Therefore, the KAMM design considers the particular needs of the students eligible for this assessment in order to increase their **access** to the assessed content—appropriate access to test content is necessary to ensure the validity of the assessment results. Lack of access could result in the measurement of sources of variance that are not related to the intended test content (*construct irrelevance*) or could allow construct-irrelevant abilities to interfere with that student’s ability to fully demonstrate what he or she knows and can do, and subsequently the test results underestimate the student’s achievement (*under-representation*).

Thus, the overall goals for creating a passage for a modified reading assessment include ensuring that the text contains enough detail to be engaging and supportive of test items that assess grade-level content, yet purposefully simplified for the KAMM student population so as to reduce the construct-irrelevant language as well as the cognitive complexity of the content without significantly altering the construct assessed. Below are key strategies for increasing access for the KAMM student population. Common to these strategies is the basic notion of facilitating or supporting students’ processing of the text by:

- Reducing sentence, paragraph, and passage length to minimize demands on working memory.
- Using text with familiar/common topics to KAMM students
- Creating clear, literal, explicit connections within the text
- Organizing and formatting text to facilitate students’ processing of information related to overall purpose/theme (e.g., use of subheadings, bulleted lists, repetition of key words/information)

Passage Word Count and Readability

Word count and readability of KAMM passages are reduced to decrease the working memory demands on students. For narrative texts, sufficient information and character detail are presented to help students be engaged in the text and respond to questions, however the text in general is less complicated and detailed, and presents little, if any extraneous story events or information.

Grade 4 KAMM passages are limited to 400 words; this KAMM passage has 380 words, which is appropriate at grade 4. General education passages range from 400-1200 words per passage.

The Lexile readability score of 450 falls within the lower limits of the grade 4 Lexile reader measure, and thus is at a lower readability level than grade 4 general education passages, yet remains on-grade level.

Sentence Structure

Simple grammatical structures are used and sentence length is kept to a minimum in order to facilitate students' processing of information. Punctuation marks associated with more complex sentence structures such as commas, colons, and semicolons, are avoided when possible (the frequent use of commas is limited to character statements). Sentences follow the general rule of containing one main idea, purpose, or event (i.e., presenting elements of a complex idea separately) in order to help students focus on key pieces of information.

Paragraph Structure

Paragraphs are generally short (two to three simple sentences) and focus on a single purpose or event. This grouping of information is intended to facilitate students' information processing by decreasing demand on working memory. Also, when possible, paragraphs start with a topic sentence in order to help focus students on the key information/idea in a paragraph and to provide structure to the information presented. Subsequent sentences support students' understanding of the key information/idea in the topic sentence.

Connections Within Text

Connections between parts of text or information within the text are explicit to minimize the need for inference. Additionally, passages use redundant statements to reduce demand on working memory (i.e., to provide readers with support in remembering prior text) and help strengthen encoding of information.

Text Organization and Formatting

In general each character statement is represented as a single paragraph. Separating out each character statement reduces the complexity of the text by encouraging readers to process each statement serially, rather than attempting to process and integrate multiple statements simultaneously. This organization strategy provides a structure for grouping information, thereby decreasing demands on working memory and facilitating students' processing of the text.

Camping at Whispering Woods

A gentle breeze blew through the trees. Tyler and his family unpacked their sleeping bags. They were camping at the Whispering Woods Campground.

Dad set up the tents. "There!" he said. "You kids sleep in this tent. Mom and I will be in the tent beside you."

"Yippee!" called Sue. "We get our own tent!"

Anna walked over, reading her favorite book. She nearly ran into a tree. "Oops!" she said.

Tyler looked all around the tent. "Are you sure there aren't any bears?" he asked cautiously.

"Of course not," said Sue. Soon the sky grew dark, and the moon began to rise.

"Goodnight!" said Mom and Dad.

Tyler snuggled down in his sleeping bag. It was dark and quiet. He was very tired. Suddenly, he heard a strange sound. *Oooouuuuhhhh!*

Tyler sat up straight, eyes wide with fear. "What was that?" he whispered.

"Probably a bear," Sue answered with a giggle.

"Shhh!" said Anna, trying to read her book with a flashlight.

Then Tyler saw shadows on the tent wall. "Look!" he said. Something was moving outside the tent. It looked about ten feet tall and had long, waving arms!

"Maybe it's a friendly bear," said Sue. "Give me the flashlight, Anna."

"But then I can't read," Anna frowned.

Sue unzipped the tent flap and climbed out to investigate. She shined the flashlight and looked all around. "I don't see anything."

Anna put down her book and followed.

"We should get Mom and Dad," Tyler whispered.

Everything seemed still and quiet. Then, *Oooouuuuhhhh!*

All three jumped and shouted, "Mom! Dad!"

Mom and Dad dashed out of their tent. "What's wrong?"

Tyler, Sue, and Anna pointed at their tent.

Then Tyler spotted a tree behind the tent. The branches swayed in the breeze. "That's it! Those branches made the shadows on the tent," he explained.

Then, in the moonlight, he saw something else. "And there's the cause of the noise." He pointed to an old owl in the tree.

Everyone laughed as they climbed back into their sleeping bags in the tents.

"I wish it had been a friendly bear," sighed Sue.

"And I just want to read my book," yawned Anna.

"And I wasn't afraid at all!" said Tyler, turning over and closing his eyes to go to sleep.

R.4.1.4.8

▲links causes and effects in appropriate-level narrative and expository texts.

In the passage, what causes the strange sound?

- A. the old owl in the tree*
- B. the branches moved by the wind
- C. the bear walking around the tents

Note:

This item assesses the central skill reflected in the indicator, but at a lower level of cognitive complexity. The causal connection between the shadows on the tent wall and swaying branches is explicitly stated in text. Therefore, the item requires students to either recall the text or return to the passage and locate (identify, recognize) the correct answer. The explicit information in the text reduces the cognitive processing requirements of the item by reducing the number of processing steps the student must take to select the correct response.

Additionally, presenting three versus four multiple-choice options reduces the demand on students' working memory because the number of possible answers the student needs to consider and select among is reduced.

R.4.1.4.10

▲ identifies the topic, main idea(s), and supporting details in appropriate-level texts.

The passage is MAINLY about

- A. what a girl reads on a camping trip.
- B. what a boy enjoys about a camping trip.
- C. what a family experiences on a camping trip.*

Note:

This item assesses the central skill reflected in the indicator by focusing directly on the student's ability to identify the main topic, rather than the information/details that support the main topic. Limiting the item to only the main topic addresses the essence of the indicator, while not increasing the cognitive processing load required by adding supporting details. Thus cognitive complexity is low.

Additionally, presenting three versus four multiple-choice options reduces the demand on students' working memory because the number of possible answers the student needs to consider and select among is reduced.

R.4.2.1.1

▲ identifies and describes characters' physical traits, personality traits, and feelings, and explains reasons for characters' actions and the consequences of those actions.

Why does Anna nearly run into a tree?

- A. She can hardly see because it is dark.
- B. She is reading her favorite book.*
- C. She feels tired and sleepy.

Note:

This item assesses the central skill reflected in the indicator, but at a lower level of cognitive complexity. Although not explicit, the passage draws a close cause and effect connection between Anna walking while reading and nearly running into the tree. This connection reduces the cognitive demand of the item to drawing a conclusion and either recall (i.e., the student recalls the information from the passage) or recognition/identification (i.e., the student returns to the passage and locates the correct answer). Having the cause and effect closely connected in the passage supports students as they complete the steps necessary to select the correct response.

Additionally, presenting three versus four multiple-choice options reduces the demand on students' working memory because the number of possible answers the student needs to consider and select among is reduced.

R.4.2.1.2

▲ identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) of the story or literary text.

What is the setting of the passage?

- A. at a campground at night*
- B. on the way to a campground
- C. at a campground in the morning

Note:

This item assesses the central skill reflected in the indicator by focusing directly on an essential aspect of the story (that it takes place at night). Although the time of day the story takes place was not explicitly stated in the story, multiple references to sleeping and darkness facilitate the inference that the story takes place at night, thus reducing the cognitive processing requirements of the item.

Additionally, presenting three versus four multiple-choice options reduces the demand on students' working memory because the number of possible answers the student needs to process is reduced.