

Grade 3 - Narrative

Nebraska Train

From the West, the train roars in,
past cattle grazing on spring grass.
They chew, then slowly lift their heads
and watch the metal giant pass.

5 *With loads of power on its back,
the coal train rides the steel track.*

Coyotes rest in noonday sun
while antelope spring swiftly by.
A cloud of dust escapes the earth
10 and reaches toward Nebraska's sky.

*With loads of power on its back,
the coal train rides the steel track.*

In days gone by, this land was dry,
but human-made lakes now wet the plains.
15 Above the train, the clouds turn grey;
all farmers welcome heavy rains.

*With loads of power on its back,
the coal train rides the steel track.*

A clap of thunder fills the air.
20 The wind blows wild and then goes still.
The sky grows dark and raindrops fall.
The spring air holds a stormy chill.

*With loads of power on its back,
the coal train rides the steel track.*

25 The storm dies out, and grasses wave.
Train's clatter is the only noise
'til sandhill cranes go flying by,
honking like they're wind-up toys.

30 *With loads of power on its back,
the coal train rides the steel track.*

Where covered wagons used to travel,
truck or car or train now goes
 along the high, steep cliffs above
where wide Missouri River flows.

35 *With loads of power on its back,
 the coal train rides the steel track.*

Through plains and towns and forests tall,
the train keeps racing—roll, roll, roll.
It clangs through towns as evening falls
40 and then drops off its load of coal.