

## Grade 5 Informational

### Going Green

Selena reached over and turned off the radio in the car. “I don’t want to hear about it,” she said when her mother looked at her. “We all know Jefferson Elementary won first prize again in the State Science Fair. It is no surprise. This is the fourth year in a row they have won first prize.”

Selena could feel her mom frowning without looking at her. “I’m sorry, Mom,” said Selena. “I am just tired of hearing about other schools winning prizes. Last week, Lake Hood Elementary received an award for serving the healthiest lunches in the city. The week before that, Hamilton Elementary won an award for students reading the most number of minutes in the state. I wish Elliot Elementary could win an award for something. All we know how to do is grow flowers.” Selena’s mom smiled. She remembered how excited Selena had been when her class planted a flower garden on the school grounds.

“Growing flowers is unusual for a school,” she reminded her daughter. “Remember the television show we watched last weekend about ‘green’ schools? Maybe you could use that idea.” As Selena got out of the car, Mom said, “Have a good day in school.”

All morning Selena could not stop thinking about her mom’s suggestion. During lunch, she pulled out a piece of paper and a pen. She used ideas from the television show to create a list of ways her school could become “green.” After only a few minutes, her list looked like this:

1. Start a school-wide recycling program.
2. Use fluorescent light bulbs.
3. Reduce the amount of paper being used.
4. Help others use fewer plastic water bottles.

Selena knew there were many other ways the school could be “green.” However, some of those steps would mean spending money instead of just making some changes. She thought if she could get others to make some of the changes on her list, her school would have a good start at becoming “green.”

Selena went home and finished her homework. She spent the rest of the evening writing steps needed to make her ideas work. She quickly saw that her ideas asked students, teachers, and staff to work together.

At the school library the next day, Selena went online to find out how much money could be saved if her ideas were used. She knew facts would help get people to

listen.

Finally, after a week of writing and rewriting, Selena was ready to present her plan. She set up a time to meet with Principal Adams. She explained her ideas for having the school become “green.” She told how much money the school could save if some of the changes were made.

“Selena, I am impressed,” said Principal Adams. “You have some wonderful ideas. Let me take them to the next school board meeting. We will see if the people on the school board like your plan.”

Selena was thrilled when she heard the school board had said yes to her “green” ideas. Elliot Elementary began to make big changes. Light bulbs were changed. Recycling bins were placed in each classroom. The school began selling reusable water bottles with “Elliot Elementary” printed on them. The number of plastic water bottles thrown away decreased. Fewer papers were being used. Students, teachers, and staff were also finding ways to reuse paper.

At the end of the school year, Selena was very excited when Elliot Elementary was given an award for the Greenest Elementary School in the City. When the report came on the local radio station, Selena could not help but reach over and turn up the volume. “Now, this is news a person can enjoy,” she said with a grin. Selena’s mom just smiled to herself once more.

## Grade 5 Informational

### World Records

Have you flown a kite in a park? Did you wonder how many kites could be flown at the same time? Perhaps you have built a snowperson in your yard. Did you wonder about the biggest snowperson ever built? Many people ask questions such as these. For more than fifty years, *Guinness World Records* has provided the answers.

#### An Unanswered Question

The idea for a book of world records started in 1951 with an unanswered question. Sir Hugh Beaver was the managing director of the Guinness Company in Ireland. He was talking with friends about birds. Sir Hugh said he thought the plover might be the fastest bird in Europe. Some of the other men disagreed. Finally they decided to look up the answer. They were disappointed to find that no one could answer the question. They could not find any books that contained information about the fastest birds.

Sir Hugh decided that a book of records was needed. The book could tell people interesting facts about many different topics. It could answer questions, and it would be very interesting to read. It could even help settle arguments!

#### Finding the Facts

A book of world records seemed like a good idea, but how could facts be gathered? How could information be proved? A man who worked for Sir Hugh suggested a way to gather information. This man knew two brothers who collected facts about all kinds of things. These brothers were twins named Norris and Ross McWhirter. The brothers found correct answers to questions such as, "What is the deepest lake?"

The Guinness Company hired the brothers to gather facts for a book of world records. The McWhirters were accurate fact checkers. They often traveled long distances to prove that information was correct. By 1955, they had collected enough information to publish a book.

#### A Popular Reference

The first book was titled *Guinness Book of World Records*. It became an instant success. More than 50,000 copies were sold the first year. Since that time, the book has continued to grow in popularity. It has sold more than 120 million copies in 37 languages. A new edition of the book is published every year. Today, the official title is *Guinness World Records*.

The book lists records in the natural world. It answers questions about the highest mountain, largest desert, and deepest canyon. It also lists records of human

accomplishments. It is divided into topics. These include science, art, and sports.

### **Setting and Breaking Records**

Many people think records are made to be broken. *Guinness World Records* must be updated every year. This is because new records are set, and old records are broken. On Guinness World Records Day each year, people are encouraged to break a record.

If you want to try to set or break a record, you must propose the idea to *Guinness World Records*. If your idea is accepted, you will receive rules to follow. More than 60,000 ideas are considered each year. More than 2,000 new records are set.

The record for most kites in the air at the same time is 6,198. It was set in 2010. The record for the largest snowperson is just over 122 feet tall. It was set in 2008. These records may already have been broken. They show that people have many interests. They also show that people like to compete!