



READING

In grade 7, your child will continue reading and writing, but in addition to stories and literature, he will read more texts that provide facts and background knowledge in areas including science and social studies. He will read more challenging texts and be asked questions that will require him to refer back to what he has read. Your child will continue to develop the ability to cite relevant evidence when interpreting or analyzing a text or supporting his points in speaking and writing. There will also be an increased emphasis on building a strong vocabulary so that your child can read and understand challenging material. Your child will build academic vocabulary as he reads more complex texts, including stories, plays, historical novels, poems, and informational books and articles. Activities in these areas include:

- Reading, analyzing, and annotating a literary text to comprehend what the author says explicitly and to discover the levels of meaning embedded deeply within complex literary texts.
- Providing an analysis of plot structure and development (e.g., conflict and resolution, rising and falling action, subplots) and determining how events advance the plot, explain previous events, and foreshadow later events.
- Reading, analyzing and annotating a text for evidence of the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in a text.
- Conducting self-checks to ensure comprehension of an informational text, persevering through difficult sections, examining unfamiliar words or phrases and attempt to uncover the meaning of unknown words.



Your child can cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from a text.

- Analyze what a text says explicitly.
- Formulate inferences from textual material.
- Cite resources that support analysis of a text.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Give your child sticky notes to jot down thoughts, questions, predictions, inferences, and connections as he reads. Instruct your child to stick the notes to the corresponding page in the text and come back to those notes when answering questions about the text.



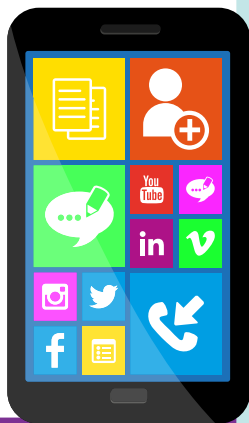
VOCABULARY

An **INFERENCE** is an idea that is drawn from the text. It is based on the details in the text and a reader's prior knowledge. It is not something that is directly stated. To infer is to make a guess about a passage based on what you read.



Your child can determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details. Your child can provide an accurate summary of the text based on this analysis.

- Recognize the theme or central idea.
- Identify supporting details.
- Develop an objective summary of the text.



VOCABULARY

THEME is the central, underlying, and controlling idea of a work of literature. It is the lesson or “moral” the author is trying to teach the reader. The theme of a text projects to the readers a universal idea. For example, the theme of “The Emperor’s New Clothes” is that honesty is a rare virtue.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Allow your child to use your social media account(s) to write short summaries of fun family activities or exciting events for friends and family members to see and respond to.
- ▶ Have your child take phone messages when an adult is unavailable to come to the phone. This teaches summarization, as he must overlook unnecessary information and only note the most important details.
- ▶ Complete a “Year in Review” notebook with the family. Keep an ongoing written record of family life by having each family member summarize important events that happen during the year. Add family photos when possible. Once a year, such as New Year’s Eve, sit together and review all of the things that have happened in your family over the last year. These notebooks will improve the writing skills of your child as well as become family keepsakes later on.



Your child can analyze how particular elements of a literary text interact with one another (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

- Determine how the elements of a story relate to one another.
- Determine how the elements of a story interact to move the story along.
- Explain how elements of a story change as they interact.
- Analyze characters' traits and actions to determine how they affect the setting, plot, theme, and other characters.
- Analyze characters' responses to events and interactions with others and how this affects setting, plot, other characters, and themes.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Help your student by discussing why the personality and background of characters are important to a story. Many times, your favorite TV or movie characters make decisions based on their set of values (e.g., Cinderella does not try to contact Prince Charming about her shoe because she is embarrassed that she is not who he thought she was). The making of these connections is important, as this will help your child make predictions and inferences.

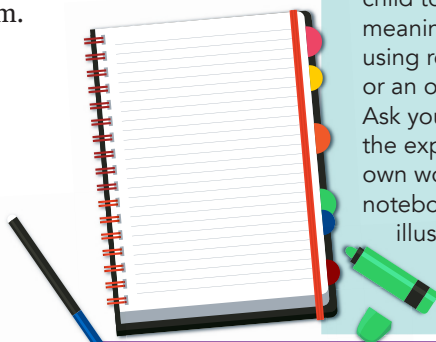


Your child can determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. Your child can analyze the impact of specific word choice (e.g., alliteration) on meaning and tone.

- Determine how the author’s use of words and phrases controls the meaning and tone of the text.
- Point out examples of figurative language, rhyme, connotative meanings, alliteration, etc., and discuss why the author chose to include them.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Encourage your child to keep a vocabulary notebook. When he comes across an unfamiliar word or phrase while reading, have him record it in the notebook. Direct your child to look up the meaning of the word using reference books or an online search. Ask your child to restate the explanation in his own words in the notebook, and draw an illustration of the word beside his explanation.



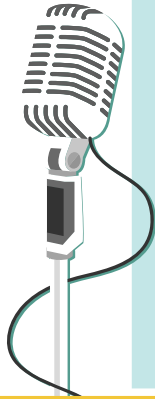
VOCABULARY

CONNOTATION refers to a meaning that is implied by a word apart from the things which it describes explicitly. Words carry cultural and emotional associations or meanings in addition to their literal meanings, or denotations. For example: Describing someone as “childish” has a negative connotation of immaturity, while describing someone as “youthful” brings to mind a person who is lively and energetic.



Your child can analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

- Know that most plays are divided into acts and scenes.
- Know that each new scene in a play usually indicates a different time and place.
- Know that most poetry is a type of literature in which words are chosen and arranged to create a certain effect.



HELP AT HOME

- ▶ When reading poetry, have your child predict the meaning of the poem based only on the title. Next, have him come up with a one or two sentence paraphrase of the poem. Remind your child to look in the poem for meaning beyond the literal. Ask him to find and label examples of figurative language/literary devices. Have your child note shifts in speakers and in attitudes throughout the poem.

KINDS OF POETRY

There are many types of poetry, but three of the major kinds are soliloquy, sonnet, and ballad.

- A **SOLILOQUY** is a speech that one gives to oneself. In a play, a character talks to himself, thinking out loud so that the audience better understands the thoughts of the character.
- A **SONNET** is a poem of 14 lines, typically having 10 syllables per line.
- A **BALLAD** is a poem or song narrating a story in short stanzas.

VOCABULARY

A poem's **FORM** refers to the way a poem is laid out on the page, including the length and placement of the lines and the grouping of lines into stanzas.



Your child can analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

- Understand that personal perspectives shape how events are perceived and described.
- Know the narrator/speaker in a story tells events from his or her own point of view.
- Realize that events may be described differently, depending on whose point of view a story is being told from.



HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Encourage your child to use “The Most Important Thing” strategy. When reading, have him list two important ideas he understands about the author’s point of view/perspective and how it impacts the reader of the text. Then, have your child list the most important thing he learned from the text. This will build the connection between the author’s point of view and how it impacts what readers learn from the text.
- ▶ Encourage your child to orally discuss or write another viewpoint of his favorite story. What if it was told from the point of view of another character in the story? What if the villain was the narrator? How and why would the story be different?



Your child can compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, camera focus and angles in a film).

- Identify how the visual presentation of a text supports the author’s message.
- Know that the presentation of a text (e.g., visual or multimedia), enhances the reader’s understanding of the text.
- Identify multimedia elements, including: lighting, sound, color, camera angles, and camera focus.



RESOURCES

The following novels have been made into films and may be considered appropriate for junior high students (not a complete list): *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney, and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* by J.K. Rowling.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Take your child to a play or musical based on a written work that he has previously read. Discuss with your child the way the props, music, costumes, and actors’ voices and movements bring the story to life. How does the lighting or background music change from scene to scene? Why?
- ▶ Discuss the ways you and your child think the film or stage version could have been improved. Ask your child questions such as: Did the scenery, casting, and music match the “picture” in your head from when you read the text? How could it have been changed to be more true to the original text, or do you think the changes improved the overall impression of the story?



Your child can compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same time, place, or character as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use and alter history.

- Understand that stories can share the same theme or topic even though the story elements may differ.
- Recognize that authors reveal the theme of a story by emphasizing a recurrent message through characters and events in a story.

HELP AT HOME

► Suggest a variety of texts surrounding a common historical event that interests your child (e.g., the Dust Bowl, the sinking of the Titanic, the Civil Rights Movement) in order to help your child see how different authors vary in their approach to communicating the same theme. Some of the texts should be informational (factual) and some of them should be fictional. This will help your child understand how information can be integrated from multiple texts on the same topic, a skill he will need for research papers in the future.



VOCABULARY

The main purpose of **INFORMATIONAL TEXTS** is to inform or instruct the reader in some way. Informational texts are complex, teach about the natural or social world, and are associated with text features such as diagrams, charts, tables, photographs, and illustrations.



By the end of the year, your child can read and comprehend literature (including stories, dramas, and poems) and informational texts in the grades 6-8 level proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

- Experience reading stories, drama, poetry, history, science, and technical texts.
- Comprehend grade-level literature at a proficient level when reading and working independently.



HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Offer your child incentives at home as his reading level increases throughout the year. If your child has an interest in a certain series of books or books on a certain topic, make those texts readily accessible for him. Help your child acquire a public library card and encourage him to use it.
- ▶ Reach out to your child's teacher for more texts, material, and activities to help your child at home.

HIGHLIGHTING TEXT

Highlighting for a purpose can help your child improve comprehension. All you need to get started is a handful of different colored highlighters and a sample essay you have written (editorials from the paper will also work).

- Use one highlighter to mark the essay's main idea or topic sentence, and any sentences that support the main idea.
- Use a different color to mark all the other "points" and their corresponding sentences.
- Explain to your child what you are doing as you work and discuss with your child what you see when done.
- Explain that you may find that some ideas were not expanded upon enough, or that sentences need to be moved around (grouped by color) to make better sense.
- Help your child decide which supports belong with which main idea and match the evidence to the claims.
- Have your child use this strategy to edit his own work.



Your child can trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

- Know that authors include details, in the form of reasons and evidence, which support and bring validity to particular points in an informational text.
- Identify which evidence supports which points.
- Examine sources and authors' opinions for credibility.



HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Listen with your child to a TV reporter, motivational speaker, or political candidate. Review the speaker's main points with your child and ask whether or not the speaker was trying to convince the audience of something. How was the speaker attempting to do so (what kinds of words, details, etc. were used)? Is the person speaking as an "expert" in his field? Who might be a better or more qualified person to speak on the topic?
- ▶ Teens can be challenging! Use that to your advantage. When disagreements arise, ask your child to put his reasons and supporting evidence into words by writing a short argument. As the parent, you do the same. Read each other's arguments and discuss which reasons are "good" and which are not. You can even take it a step further and each write a rebuttal in response to the original arguments. This is a great way to provide a "real-life" purpose for your child's writing.

