

Improving Engagement and Literacy Skills with Choice Literacy Centers

by

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A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Literacy Education.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Introduction

This capstone project was designed as a response to the research question: *How do choice literacy centers improve student engagement and literacy skills in a middle school English Language Arts class?* The purpose of this project was to design weekly literacy centers to implement in a seventh grade English Language Arts classroom in order to increase student engagement and autonomy; these improvements then further develop student literacy skills. As students transition to middle and high school, opportunities for student choice within curriculum become limited, and there is a need for students to have authentic literacy and decision-making opportunities. These literacy centers are meant to encourage students to be curious and engaged learners.

Project Description

This project provides weekly literacy center activities to be used for a semester in a seventh grade English Language Arts classroom in Minnesota to increase student engagement and literacy skills. These centers include at least one activity from each of the following categories: vocabulary, fluency/listening, digital literacy and print concepts, choice reading, choice writing, research, and missing work. The number of centers made available to students each week is determined by the classroom environment, the number of students, and current curriculum study. Alongside these are small-group instruction for completing needs assessments and to provide supplemental instruction for students identified with reading struggles. These learning activities are aligned with the Minnesota seventh-grade English Language Arts standards along with lower-level standards appropriate for readers who struggle with literacy skills.

The project includes a schedule for year-long implementation that can be adapted as necessary for specific classrooms or districts. This implementation schedule has recommended timelines for establishing routines, completing needs assessments, incorporating small groups, and completing student portfolios.

For this weekly activity, students complete the Renaissance Place STAR Reading test as their needs assessment for vocabulary and comprehension; it includes information on both literature and informational texts. The teacher also references student MCA results from the previous year, if available. Student read-alouds completed in small groups are used to assess fluency and comprehension. Teacher observation during whole group instruction also provides formative assessment for other literacy skills, such as digital print concepts, research, and writing.

Using feedback from these need assessments, the teacher determines which small group instruction is most appropriate for individual students. These mini-lessons are designed to provide supplemental instruction to students who are struggling with literacy skills and are designed to be adapted to fit the current curriculum of the course. For example, a mini-lesson on reading nonfiction allows the teacher to choose a leveled article related to the class content from the NewsELA website.

This project has students complete a portfolio assessment at the end of term, including tracking cards that indicate their practice at all of the centers throughout the term. This portfolio includes pieces that the student identifies as showcasing their abilities in a variety of literacy skills. For example, a student may provide a QR code poster to a speech recorded on Flipgrid to indicate their fluency skill, and there may be a Google Doc embedded with a creative writing piece that showcases the student's improved inference and writing. This particular project is

designed for students to create a digital portfolio on Google Sites, but could be adapted for students to create a physical, printed portfolio.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project is to increase student engagement and autonomy, to provide tier two interventions to students who struggle with literacy skills, and to improve all students' literacy skills so that they are successful in academics. Benefits of literacy centers include fostering engagement, literacy skill growth, opportunities for small-group instruction, and developing student autonomy. The design of this project is supported by a variety of learning theories.

SEVENTH GRADE WEEKLY LITERACY CENTERS LIST

Overall

Activity Title	Standard/Objective	Materials	Reference(s)
Implementation Schedule	Educators can assess and provide feedback to students based on needs assessments and portfolio observations.	Implementation schedule	
Student Goal Sheets	Students can develop and write literacy goals based on their perceived needs and desires.	Student Goal Sheet (digital links to additional reading) Writing Utensil	Jane Austen Literacy Foundation.
Tracking Cards	Students can monitor and assess their progress and work completion towards their literacy goals.	Tracking Cards Writing utensils	
Portfolio Checklist & Rubric	Students can actively reflect and prepare materials to represent their growth towards their literacy goals.	Portfolio Checklist & Rubric Writing Utensils	Prevatte, L. (2007).
Google Sites Portfolio Directions	Students can use technology to create a digital portfolio that demonstrates their literacy goal progress.	Direction sheet with QR Code to Video directions (YouTube link)	
Mini Lesson Template	Educators can adapt or prepare mini lessons prior to introducing new centers or for guided-teacher centers.	Mini Lesson Template	Roberts, K. (2018).

Digital Literacy and Print Concepts

Activity Title	Standard/Objective	Materials	Reference(s)
Reading Infographics	Students will be able to explain information presented through infographics.	Direction Sheet Printed Infographics <u>Copy of Janet Neyer's "Why Read?"</u> Copies of Reading Infographics organizer	American Heart Association. (2017). Calilhanna, A. (2020). Darling, K. (n.d.). First Tier Studios Ltd. (2018). Gallagher, K. (2015). Neyer, J. (n.d.).

Fluency/Listening

Activity Title	Standard/Objective	Materials	Reference(s)
Poetry Finds	Students will be able to listen to poetry for comprehension of figurative language and poetic elements.	Direction Sheet Poetry annotations sheets with QR codes to videos of poems	Gracyk, T. (2015, July 20). Hall, R. (2011, Feb. 12). Longfellow, H. W. (n.d.). McDowell, R. (2008, Nov. 15). Miller, T. (2012, Nov. 6). Noyes, A. (n.d.). Poe, E. A. (n.d.). Prince Ea. (2015, April 20). Service, R. W. (n.d.).

Missing Work

Activity Title	Standard/Objective	Materials	Reference
Missing Work	Students will self-assess for missing assignments.	Direction sheet Crate with folders organized by classes with handouts for absent students Missing Work To-Do List	

Reading

Activity Title	Standard/Objective	Materials	Reference(s)
Annotating Text Connections	Students are able to analyze a text through text connections.	Direction sheet Annotation handout	Bates, A. (2015, May 5). Roberts, K. (2018).
Character Analysis	Students are able to support character analysis with textual evidence.	Direction sheet Character Observations	Roberts, K. (2018).
Theme Ideas in Fiction	Students are able to determine two possible theme ideas during choice fiction reading.	Direction sheet Theme Idea handout	Roberts, K. (2018).
Topic, Main Idea, and Supporting Details	Students are able to describe the main idea and supporting details of a text.	Direction sheet Main Idea handout	Mometrix Academy. (2017, August 22).

Research

Activity Title	Standard/Objective	Materials	Reference
Identifying Bias	Students will be able to distinguish between facts and opinions to determine bias.	Direction Sheet Bias Graphic Organizer Copies of nonfiction texts	Prevatte, L. (2007).

Small Group Assessment/Instruction

Activity Title	Standard/Objective	Materials	Reference
Read Alouds	Students will be able to demonstrate their reading fluency and comprehension through read aloud.	Teacher directions Read aloud passages Writing utensils	Leslie, L., Caldwell, J. (2016). Roberts, K. (2018).
Reading Skills Assessment	Students will be able to demonstrate their strengths of four reading skills:	Teacher directions Copies of text Copies of Student Reading Questions	Roberts, K. (2018).

	identifying importance, character analysis, interpretation, and author's craft.	Copy of Skill Assessment Grid	
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Vocabulary

Activity Title	Standard/Objective	Materials	Reference(s)
Bananagrams & Dictionary Work	Students can use alphabetic awareness and reference materials to write words.	Direction sheet Bananagrams Dictionaries Large grid paper Colored pencils	Neltner, H. (2013, September 2).
List-Group-Label	Students can recognize relationships between words and concepts.	Direction sheet Nonfiction articles - laminated Handout	McKnight, K.S. (2019). NewsELA. (2021).
Vocabulary Chips	Students can develop understanding of word relationships between synonyms and antonyms.	Direction sheet Vocabulary Chip handout Thesaurus (book or digital)	McKnight, K.S. (2019).
Word Root Finds with Short Stories/Poems	Students can identify meanings of unknown words using common word root definitions.	Direction sheet Copies of stories & poems Common Root reference sheets Copies of Root Word Finds Writing Utensils	CommonLit. (2014-2021). Miacademy Learning Channel. (2019, June 6). Prevatte, L. (2007).

Writing

Activity Title	Standard/Objective	Materials	Reference(s)
Create a Backstory	Students will be able to examine an image to compose a fictional backstory.	Direction sheet Copies of images from news stories	Bettman & Getty Images. (2021). Frey, K. (2019). Harmon, E. (2021). Hill Street Studios & Getty Images. (2021)

			Hooley, E. (2018) Reuters & Gray, D. (2016). Stetson, M. (2021) Street Tails. (2021
Inspiration Draws	Students will be able to write a creative story using character and plot prompts.	Direction sheet Binder zipper pouches (3) Cut inspiration slips (may laminate to encourage reuse)	MonthOfTheNovel. (2011, November 15).
Organizing an Argument	Students will be able to organize and write an argument.	Direction sheet Argument graphic organizer	Kelly, M. (2020). McKnight, K.S. (2019).
Write a Letter	Students will be able to write a letter to either inform or persuade their audience.	Direction sheet Envelopes	Frankel, J.C. (1975). Kels D. (2018, December 2). MacDonald, M. (2019, March 7).

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY LITERACY CENTERS

Academic Quarter	Activity	Notes
1	Implement Literacy Centers	Establish weekly along with specific and intentional routines
1	Needs Assessments	Complete for all students during small groups
1 & 2	Implement Tier Two Interventions	Utilize small groups based on needs assessments
2	Prepare Student Portfolios	Students utilize the checklist and rubric to prepare portfolios to determine their progress
2	Complete and Assess Student Portfolios	Educators determine student growth and provide feedback through student portfolios for second semester literacy goals
3	Needs Assessments	Complete for all students along with portfolio observations to change small group instruction
3 & 4	Adjust Tier Two Interventions	Adjustments to groups and lesson content based on portfolio observations and needs assessments
4	Prepare Student Portfolios	Students utilize the checklist and rubric to prepare portfolios to determine their progress
4	Complete and Assess Student Portfolios; Needs Assessments	Educators determine student growth through student portfolios and final needs assessments for the following year

OVERALL: Choosing Your Literacy Goals

Name:

Class:

Hour:

What is literacy?

Literacy is often described as the ability to read and write; however, literacy is much more than this!

Literacy is the ability to communicate in a variety of ways, through reading and writing, speaking and listening, and viewing and creating.

Why does it matter?

Check out what the Jane Austen Literacy Foundation has to say about [Why Literacy Matters: Reading & Writing for All](#).

What are your strengths?

Check which of the following skills you feel are a strength of yours:

- Reading for entertainment (novels, short stories, comics, etc.)
- Reading for information (articles, nonfiction books, etc.)
- Writing creatively (stories, poems, songs, etc.)
- Writing to inform/persuade (essays, articles, etc.)
- Speaking to entertain (stories, comedy, etc.)
- Speaking to inform (speeches)
- Listening for entertainment (podcasts, audiobooks, etc.)
- Listening for information (podcasts, lectures, speeches, etc.)
- Viewing photos/images/art/videos
- Creating photos/images/art/videos

What are your weaknesses?

Check which of the following skills you feel are a weakness of yours:

- Reading for entertainment (novels, short stories, comics, etc.)
- Reading for information (articles, nonfiction books, etc.)
- Writing creatively (stories, poems, songs, etc.)
- Writing to inform/persuade (essays, articles, etc.)
- Speaking to entertain (stories, comedy, etc.)
- Speaking to inform (speeches)
- Listening for entertainment (podcasts, audiobooks, etc.)
- Listening for information (podcasts, lectures, speeches, etc.)
- Viewing visuals for understanding (photos, images, art, videos, etc.)
- Creating visuals to communicate (photos, images, art, videos, etc.)

What do you want to improve? Why?

Choose two skills that you would like to improve on this semester. Explain why you would like to be better at this particular skill. Then write a specific, measurable, and achievable goal for the semester.

Example:

Skill: Creating visuals to communicate ideas.

Why: I think that I can explain my ideas very well in writing, but when it comes to creating a visual, it seems too complicated and I do not know how to simplify my ideas.

Goal: I will make a total of two infographics during the semester to show what skills I have learned.

(The goal is specific -- create infographics, measurable -- two, and achievable -- to be done in a semester which is 18 weeks.)

Skill #1:

Why:

Goal:

Skill #2:

Why:

Goal:

OVERALL: Weekly Tracking Sheet

Name:

Class:

Hour:

Quarter _____

	Station 1	Station 2	Teacher Comments
Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	
Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	
Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	

Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	
Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	
Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	
Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	

	Progress Summary:	Progress Summary:	
Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	
Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	
Date:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	Station Name: Why? Progress Summary:	

OVERALL: Literacy Center Portfolio Checklist and Rubric

The following items must be included in your portfolio:

Evidence of the following skills practiced:

- Vocabulary
- Fluency/Listening
- Digital Literacy or Print Concepts
- Active Reading
- Writing
- Research

Personal reflections of:

- Skill #1 goal
- Skill #2 goal

Each of the following skills will be assessed by using the following rubric:

1. Little or no evidence
2. Below average
3. Adequate evidence
4. Better than average
5. Superior evidence

Skill	Objective	Proficiency	Comments
Vocabulary	Student demonstrates vocabulary growth.	5 4 3 2 1	
Fluency/Listening	Student recounts comprehension through listening.	5 4 3 2 1	
Digital Literacy or Print Concepts	Student decodes digital or print texts appropriately.	5 4 3 2 1	
Active Reading	Student recognizes active reading strategies.	5 4 3 2 1	
Writing	Student determines	5 4 3 2 1	

	strengths in writing.		
Research	Student identifies main ideas and key details.	5 4 3 2 1	
Personal Reflection #1	Student recognizes self-monitoring and growth.	5 4 3 2 1	
Personal Reflection #2	Student recognizes self-monitoring and growth.	5 4 3 2 1	

OVERALL: Google Sites Portfolio Directions

Your goal is to use technology to create a digital portfolio that demonstrates your literacy goal progress.

Have the following materials ready:

- Your **Choosing Your Literacy Goals** sheet
- Your **Literacy Center Portfolio Checklist & Rubric** sheet
- Your completed **Literacy Center Activities** from your Literacy Center folder

To create your Google Site, use the following video to guide you through the process. Use the video actively: pause when you are going to complete a step and rewatch sections when you do not understand.

Mrs. Laugen's

Literacy Portfolio Example



<https://youtu.be/0So7IjdiUI>

OVERALL: Mini Lesson Template

Text:

Focus Reading Strategy:

Two Text Passages:

1.

2.

Lesson Order

Prep:

Yesterday we . . .	
Today (student objective) . . .	
Because (explain real life application) . . .	

Demonstrate:

Using the first passage, explain why you chose this specific passage for this strategy.

Demonstrate teacher-think-aloud as you read the passage. Possible phrases to use:

- “Watch how I _____ (strategy) on this scene.”
- “I chose this scene because _____.”
- “So first I _____.”
- “Hmmm. I’m having some trouble. One thing I can do is _____.”
- “It’s important to try this work because _____.”
- Did you see how I _____ (strategy)?”

Notes:

Student Practice:

Using the second passage, have students practice the strategy with your observation and guidance. Possible phrases to guide them:

- “Now it’s your turn to try _____ (strategy).”
- “That is a good example of this strategy.”
- “Great job making that _____ (strategy).”
- “As you get to work independently today, _____.”

Notes:

Adapted from and phrases from Kate Roberts’ *A Novel Approach: Whole-Class Novels, Student-Centered Teaching, and Choice*

DIGITAL LITERACY: Reading Infographics

Literacy Objective:

Explain information presented through infographics.

“What Is An Infographic”: View this YouTube video from First Tier Studios Ltd to refresh your understanding of an infographic.

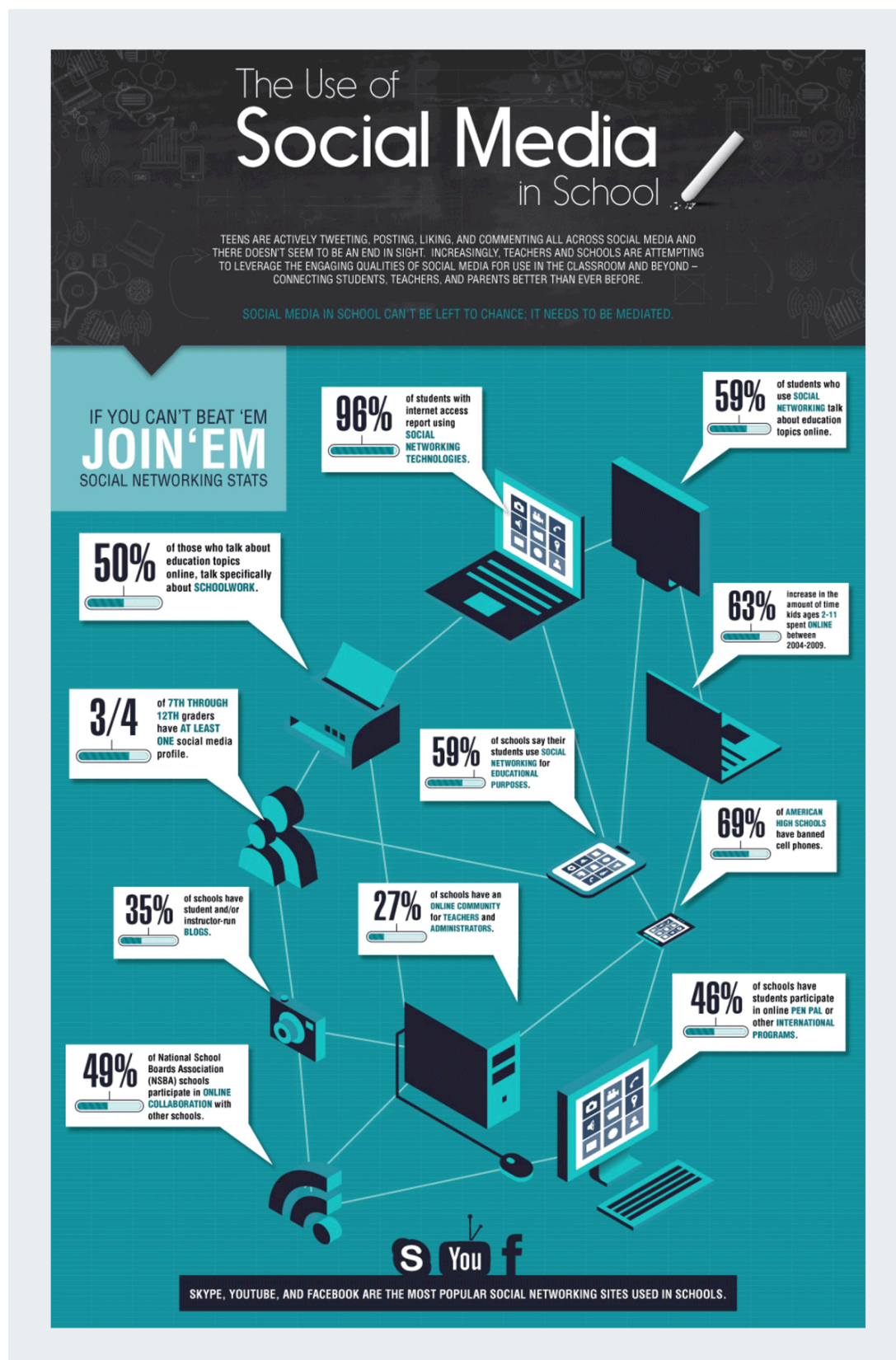


https://youtu.be/rnGe_4hw52s

Directions:

1. Choose an infographic to analyze.
2. List at least two observations about the layout of the infographic. Here are questions to consider:
 - What types of graphics are presented?
 - How is it organized on the page?
 - What stands out the most?
3. List at least three important facts presented by the infographic.
4. Based on the information presented, what are some claims (inferences) you can draw from the information presented? Create a list of at least three claims.

This activity has been adapted from Kelly Gallagher’s *In the Best Interest of Students*.



Retrieved from <https://visme.co/blog/infographic-examples-for-students/>

So you want to eat clean?

American Heart Association | American Stroke Association
Life is why.

With so much conflicting information out there, how do you know what healthy eating really looks like? Let's clear up some of the myths about eating clean.

What does healthy eating look like?¹



EAT PLENTY OF

VEGETABLES



FRUITS



WHOLE GRAINS

Myth Only fresh fruits and vegetables are healthy.

Fact A healthy diet can include fresh, frozen, canned and dried produce.

Myth All processed foods are bad and full of chemicals.

Fact Most foods you see at the grocery store have been processed in some way. Processed foods that don't have a lot of added sugar or sodium can be a part of a healthy diet. Think: baby carrots, whole grain bread, plain yogurt, or chopped nuts!

Healthy Eating TIPS

- ✓ Select canned and frozen fruit and vegetables without salty sauces or sugary syrups.
- ✓ Drain and rinse canned products to get rid of some of the additives like salt and sugar.

Include these foods:²


Low-Fat & Non-Fat Dairy


Skinless Poultry


Fish


Beans & Legumes


Nontropical Vegetable Oils


Nuts & Seeds

Healthy Eating TIPS

- ✓ Prepare food at home to control what is added.
- ✓ Bring out the natural flavors in foods by using healthier cooking methods like grilling, braising, roasting, searing, and sautéing.
- ✓ Add flavor with delicious herbs, spices, black pepper and citrus juices instead of sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.

Myth All foods labeled "natural" are good for you.

Fact When it comes to food packaging, there is no official definition for the term "natural."³

Myth If I recognize the ingredients on the label, I have nothing to worry about.

Fact Even if you recognize the ingredients, the food may still have too much sodium, added sugars, and unhealthy fats.

Watch for and limit:⁴


Salt/Sodium


Sugary Drinks


Sweets


Fatty or Processed Meats – choose lean or extra-lean meats instead

Healthy Eating TIPS

- ✓ Compare food labels and choose nutritious foods with the lowest amounts of sodium.
- ✓ Be aware of portion and serving sizes and total calories eaten.

Myth I should avoid the middle aisles of the grocery store.

Fact There are many foods throughout the grocery store that can be part of a healthy eating pattern.

Want more control over the foods you buy at the grocery store and eat at restaurants? Join our movement to tell the food industry you want healthier ingredients. Your voice matters!

Take action at [HEART.ORG/SODIUM.](http://heart.org/sodium)

¹2015 Van Horn, Lusk, Ju, Shi, S. Caron, Lamerica, J. Apple, Lusk, E. Balle, Christina Costanzo, Yvonne Klemm, Krista Lavanette, Alan H. Lichtenstein, Rebecca S. Johnson, Joseph J. Thomas, Michael M. Jacobs, Wayne Rosati and Penny Kris-Etherton. Recommended Dietary Pattern to Achieve Adherence to the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology (AHA/ACC) Guidelines: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association. Circulation. 2014; 129(25):2500-2510. doi:10.1161/01.cir.0000440445.914914.1f
²2015. <http://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling/food-labeling-guidance-document/RegulatoryInformation/Labeling/LabelingInformation/040000.htm>
³2010. American Heart Association. © 11/2010/12/09

Retrieved from

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/what-is-clean-eating>

Name:

Digital Literacy: Reading Infographics

Infographic Title/Topic:

Layout Observations

Important Facts

Claims (inferences)

FLUENCY: Poetry Finds

Literacy Objective:

Listen to poetry for comprehension of figurative language and poetic elements.

Review the following poetry terms we've studied:

Alliteration: A repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words

Assonance: A repetition of of vowel sounds, such as the long "o" in "Go slow on the road"

Hyperbole: An exaggerated comparison

Metaphor: A comparison that state that something *is* something else

Personification: Giving human characteristics to something nonhuman, as in "my alarm clock yelled at me"

Onomatopoeia: A word that imitates the sound it represents

Repetition: The intentional repeating of a word or phrase to add emphasis or create meaning

Rhyme: A repetition of similar sounds at the end of words, such as *place* and *face*

Rhyme Scheme: The ordered pattern of rhymes at the ends of the lines of a poem or verse

Rhythm & Meter: the pattern of stressed ("I") and unstressed ("U") syllables in a poem; the way the words of a poem move

Simile: A comparison between two unlike things using the words *like* or *as*

Directions:

1. Using your poetry terms, listen to the reading of a narrative poem of your choice.
2. As you listen, highlight the lines that stand out to you!
3. After listening, go back to your highlighted lines and annotate why they stood out to you.
4. If they apply, label your highlighted lines with your poetry terms.
5. How many can you find?

Poetry Find!

Dear Future Generations: Sorry
BY PRINCE EA



<https://youtu.be/eRLJscAlk1M>

Dear Future Generations,
 I think I speak for the rest of us when I say
 Sorry, sorry we left you with our mess of a planet
 Sorry that we were too caught up in our own doings to do
 something
 Sorry we listened to people who made excuses
 To do nothing
 I hope you forgive us
 We just didn't realize how special the earth was
 Like a marriage going wrong
 We didn't know what we had until it was gone

For example
 I'm guessing you probably know what is the Amazon
 Desert, right?
 Well believe it or not
 It was once called once called the Amazon Rain Forest
 And there were billions of trees there
 And all of them gorgeous and just um..
 Oh, you don't know much about trees, do you?
 Well let me tell you that trees are amazing
 And I mean, we literally breath the air
 They are creating, and they clean up our pollution
 Our carbon, they store and purify water,
 Give us medicine that cures ours diseases, food that feeds
 us
 Which is why I am so sorry, to tell you that
 We burned them down
 Cut them down with brutal machines, horrific
 At a rate of 40 football fields every minute
 That's 50% of all the trees in the world all gone
 In the last 100 years
 Why? For this.

And that wouldn't make me so sad
 If there weren't so many pictures of leaves on it

You know when I was a child
 I read how the Native Americans had such consideration
 For the planet that they felt responsible
 For how they left the land for the next 7 generations
 Which brings me great sorrow, because most of us today
 Don't even care about tomorrow
 So I'm sorry, I'm sorry that we put profit above people
 Greed over need, the rule of gold above the golden rule
 I'm sorry we used nature as a credit card with no spending
 limit
 Over drafting animals to extinction
 Stealing your chance to ever see their uniqueness
 Or become friends with them
 Sorry we poison the oceans so much that you can't even
 swim in them
 But most of all, i'm sorry about our mindset
 'cause we had the nerve to call this destruction
 "Progress"

Hey Fox News, if you don't think climate change is a threat
 I dare you to interview the thousands of homeless people
 in Bangladesh
 See, while you was in your penthouse nestled
 Their homes were literally washed away
 Beneath their feet due to the rising sea levels
 And Sara Palin, you said that you love the smell of fossil
 fuels
 Well I urge you to talk to the kids of Beijing
 Who are forced to wear pollution masks just to go to
 school
 See, you can ignore this, but the thing about truth is
 It can be denied, not avoided
 So I'm sorry future generation
 I'm sorry that our footprints became a sinkhole and not a
 garden
 I'm sorry that we paid so much attention to ISIS
 And very little how fast the ice is melting in the arctic
 I'm sorry we doomed you
 And I'm sorry we didn't find another planet in time to
 move to
 I am s...

You know what, cut the beat, I'm not sorry
 This future I do not accept it
 Because an error does not become a mistake
 Until you refuse to correct it

We can redirect this, how?
Let me suggest that if a farmer sees a tree that is unhealthy
They don't look at the branches to diagnosis it
They look at the root, so like that farmer
We must look at the root
And not to the branches of the government
Not to the politicians run by corporations
We are the root, we are the foundation, this generation
It is up to us to take care of this planet
It is our only home, we must globally warm our hearts
And change the climate of our souls
And realize that we are not apart from nature
We are a part of nature
And to betray nature is to betray us
To save nature, is to save us
Because whatever you're fighting for:
Racism, Poverty, Feminism, Gay Rights
Or any type of Equality
It won't matter in the least
Because if we don't all work together to save the
environment
We will be equally extinct

Sorry

Poetry Find!

Annabel Lee**BY EDGAR ALLAN POE**
<https://youtu.be/pEO9HyKfNeI>

It was many and many a year ago,
 In a kingdom by the sea,
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know
 By the name of Annabel Lee;
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 But we loved with a love that was more than love—
 I and my Annabel Lee—
 With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful Annabel Lee;
 So that her highborn kinsmen came
 And bore her away from me,
 To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
 Went envying her and me—
 Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we—
 Of many far wiser than we—
 And neither the angels in Heaven above
 Nor the demons down under the sea
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul

<p>Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;</p> <p>For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;</p> <p>And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;</p> <p>And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride, In her sepulchre there by the sea— In her tomb by the sounding sea.</p>	
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Poetry Find!

The Cremation of Sam McGeeBY ROBERT W. SERVICE

<https://youtu.be/yJNZwumwj0>

*There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil for gold;
The Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold;
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge
I cremated Sam McGee.*

Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee, where the cotton
blossoms and blows.
Why he left his home in the South to roam 'round the Pole,
God only knows.
He was always cold, but the land of gold seemed to hold him
like a spell;
Though he'd often say in his homely way that "he'd sooner
live in hell."

On a Christmas Day we were mushing our way over the
Dawson trail.
Talk of your cold! through the parka's fold it stabbed like a
driven nail.
If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze till sometimes
we couldn't see;
It wasn't much fun, but the only one to whimper was Sam
McGee.

And that very night, as we lay packed tight in our robes
beneath the snow,
And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead were dancing
heel and toe,
He turned to me, and "Cap," says he, "I'll cash in this trip, I
guess;
And if I do, I'm asking that you won't refuse my last
request."

Well, he seemed so low that I couldn't say no; then he says
with a sort of moan:

"It's the cursèd cold, and it's got right hold till I'm chilled
clean through to the bone.

Yet 'tain't being dead—it's my awful dread of the icy grave
that pains;

So I want you to swear that, foul or fair, you'll cremate my
last remains."

A pal's last need is a thing to heed, so I swore I would not
fail;

And we started on at the streak of dawn; but God! he looked
ghastly pale.

He crouched on the sleigh, and he raved all day of his home
in Tennessee;

And before nightfall a corpse was all that was left of Sam
McGee.

There wasn't a breath in that land of death, and I hurried,
horror-driven,

With a corpse half hid that I couldn't get rid, because of a
promise given;

It was lashed to the sleigh, and it seemed to say: "You may
tax your brawn and brains,

But you promised true, and it's up to you to cremate those
last remains."

Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its
own stern code.

In the days to come, though my lips were dumb, in my heart
how I cursed that load.

In the long, long night, by the lone firelight, while the
huskies, round in a ring,

Howled out their woes to the homeless snows— O God! how
I loathed the thing.

And every day that quiet clay seemed to heavy and heavier
grow;

And on I went, though the dogs were spent and the grub was
getting low;

The trail was bad, and I felt half mad, but I swore I would
not give in;

And I'd often sing to the hateful thing, and it hearkened with
a grin.

Till I came to the marge of Lake Lebarge, and a derelict there

lay;

It was jammed in the ice, but I saw in a trice it was called the
"Alice May."

And I looked at it, and I thought a bit, and I looked at my
frozen chum;

Then "Here," said I, with a sudden cry, "is my
cre-ma-tor-eum."

Some planks I tore from the cabin floor, and I lit the boiler
fire;

Some coal I found that was lying around, and I heaped the
fuel higher;

The flames just soared, and the furnace roared—such a blaze
you seldom see;

And I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal, and I stuffed in
Sam McGee.

Then I made a hike, for I didn't like to hear him sizzle so;
And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled, and the
wind began to blow.

It was icy cold, but the hot sweat rolled down my cheeks,
and I don't know why;

And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak went streaking down
the sky.

I do not know how long in the snow I wrestled with grisly
fear;

But the stars came out and they danced about ere again I
ventured near;

I was sick with dread, but I bravely said: "I'll just take a peep
inside.

I guess he's cooked, and it's time I looked"; ... then the door I
opened wide.

And there sat Sam, looking cool and calm, in the heart of the
furnace roar;

And he wore a smile you could see a mile, and he said:
"Please close that door.

It's fine in here, but I greatly fear you'll let in the cold and
storm—

Since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee, it's the first time
I've been warm."

There are strange things done in the midnight sun

By the men who toil for gold;

The Arctic trails have their secret tales

<p><i>That would make your blood run cold; The Northern Lights have seen queer sights, But the queerest they ever did see Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge I cremated Sam McGee.</i></p>	
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Poetry Find!

The Landlord's Tale. Paul Revere's Ride
BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW



<https://youtu.be/U4hUMQG3MI>

8

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
 Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
 On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
 Hardly a man is now alive
 Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
 By land or sea from the town to-night,
 Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
 Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
 One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
 And I on the opposite shore will be,
 Ready to ride and spread the alarm
 Through every Middlesex village and farm,
 For the country folk to be up and to arm."
 Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
 Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
 Just as the moon rose over the bay,
 Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
 The Somerset, British man-of-war;
 A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
 Across the moon like a prison bar,
 And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
 By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
 Wanders and watches with eager ears,
 Till in the silence around him he hears
 The muster of men at the barrack door,
 The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
 And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
 Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
 By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
 To the belfry-chamber overhead,

And startled the pigeons from their perch
 On the sombre rafters, that round him made
 Masses and moving shapes of shade, —
 By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
 To the highest window in the wall,
 Where he paused to listen and look down
 A moment on the roofs of the town,
 And the moonlight flowing over all.
 Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
 In their night-encampment on the hill,
 Wrapped in silence so deep and still
 That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
 The watchful night-wind, as it went
 Creeping along from tent to tent,
 And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
 A moment only he feels the spell
 Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
 Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
 For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
 On a shadowy something far away,
 Where the river widens to meet the bay, —
 A line of black that bends and floats
 On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
 Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
 On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
 Now he patted his horse's side,
 Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
 Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
 And turned and tightened his saddle girth;
 But mostly he watched with eager search
 The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
 As it rose above the graves on the hill,
 Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
 And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
 A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
 He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
 But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
 A second lamp in the belfry burns!
 A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
 A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
 And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
 Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
 That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
 The fate of a nation was riding that night;

And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock,
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled, —
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;

<p>And so through the night went his cry of alarm To every Middlesex village and farm, — A cry of defiance and not of fear, A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door, And a word that shall echo forevermore! For, borne on the night-wind of the Past, Through all our history, to the last, In the hour of darkness and peril and need, The people will waken and listen to hear The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed, And the midnight message of Paul Revere.</p>	
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Poetry Find!

The HighwaymanBY ALFRED NOYES
<https://youtu.be/ryu1JZiSbHo>

PART ONE

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees.
 The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.
 The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
 And the highwayman came riding—

Riding—riding—

The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at
 his chin,

A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin.

They fitted with never a wrinkle. His boots were up to the
 thigh.

And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,

His pistol butts a-twinkle,

His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard.
 He tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and
 barred.

He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting
 there

But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,

Bess, the landlord's daughter,

Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
 Where Tim the ostler listened. His face was white and peaked.

His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,

But he loved the landlord's daughter,

The landlord's red-lipped daughter.

Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say—

“One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,

But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning
 light;

Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
 Then look for me by moonlight,
 Watch for me by moonlight,
 I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the
 way.”

He rose upright in the stirrups. He scarce could reach her hand,
 But she loosened her hair in the casement. His face burnt like a
 brand
 As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his
 breast;
 And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
 (O, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
 Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away
 to the west.

PART TWO

He did not come in the dawning. He did not come at noon;
 And out of the tawny sunset, before the rise of the moon,
 When the road was a gypsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
 A red-coat troop came marching—
 Marching—marching—
 King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord. They drank his ale instead.
 But they gagged his daughter, and bound her, to the foot of her
 narrow bed.
 Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
 There was death at every window;
 And hell at one dark window;
 For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that he
 would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest.
 They had bound a musket beside her, with the muzzle beneath
 her breast!
 “Now, keep good watch!” and they kissed her. She heard the
 doomed man say—
Look for me by moonlight;
 Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
 She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or
 blood!

They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours
 crawled by like years
 Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
 Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
 The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it. She strove no more for the
 rest.
 Up, she stood up to attention, with the muzzle beneath her
 breast.
 She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
 For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
 Blank and bare in the moonlight;
 And the blood of her veins, in the moonlight, throbbed to her
 love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horsehoofs ringing
 clear;
Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did
 not hear?
 Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
 The highwayman came riding—
 Riding—riding—
 The red coats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight
 and still.

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the echoing night!
 Nearer he came and nearer. Her face was like a light.
 Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep
 breath,
 Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
 Her musket shattered the moonlight,
 Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with
 her death.

He turned. He spurred to the west; he did not know who stood
 Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own
 blood!
 Not till the dawn he heard it, and his face grew grey to hear
 How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
 The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
 Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the
 darkness there.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
 With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier

brandished high.

Blood red were his spurs in the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat;

When they shot him down on the highway,

Down like a dog on the highway,

And he lay in his blood on the highway, with a bunch of lace at his throat.

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,

When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,

When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor;

A highwayman comes riding—

Riding—riding—

A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard.

He taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred.

He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there

But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,

Bess, the landlord's daughter,

Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

MISSING WORK

Literacy Objective:

Self-assess for missing assignments.

Directions:

1. Login to Skyward to check your progress of graded assignments. Add any missing assignments to your Missing Work To-Do List.
2. Login to Google Classroom and check Classwork for any missing or incomplete assignments. Add these to your Missing Work To-Do List.
3. Review your Missing Work To-Do List. Determine the order of importance: Which assignments must you complete first? Consider:
 - Which assignments are part of a bigger project?
 - Which assignments are most affecting my grade?
 - Which assignments do I have questions about?
4. Choose one assignment to focus on at a time.
5. Locate any materials needed for your assignment. These may be found on:
 - Google Classroom
 - Assignment Crate with your appropriate class and hour
6. If you have questions about your assignment, ask a nearby peer to provide help. If a peer cannot assist you, wait until your teacher is available.

Name:

Missing Work: To-Do List

Use Skyward and Google Classroom to list all of your missing work:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

To the left of the bullet point, label the order of importance in completing your missing work assignment. Consider:

- Which assignments are part of a bigger project?
- Which assignments are most affecting my grade?
- Which assignments do I have questions about?

Use the space below to record questions that you have about these assignments:

READING: Annotating Text Connections

Literacy Objective:

Analyze a text through text connections.

“Text Connections”: View this YouTube video from Amanda Bates to refresh the different types of text connections: text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world.



<https://youtu.be/gP59YwkBuWs>

Directions:

1. As you are reading your choice text, record at least SIX text connections (this may take multiple days to complete). Be sure to describe what is happening in the text in your annotation.
2. After finishing your choice text, use your annotations to complete a long write describing what is important from your reading. To help grow your thinking, you may use the following sentence starters:
 - I think . . .
 - For example . . .
 - This is important because . . .
 - The reason for this is . . .
 - This connects to . . .
 - On the other hand . . .

This activity has been adapted from Kate Roberts' *A Novel Approach*.

Reading: Annotating Text Connections

Name:

Text Title:

Text-to- _____

Text-to- _____

Text-to- _____

Text-to- _____

Text-to- _____

Text-to- _____

READING: Character Analysis

Literacy Objective:

Support character analysis with textual evidence.

Review the following definitions related to character analysis to refresh how we use these observations to draw conclusions about characters. The examples are about Cole Matthews from our class novel *Touching Spirit Bear*.

Character Actions/Speech: This is what readers observe the characters doing and saying in the text.

Cole burns down his shelter before he attempts to escape the island.

Character Feelings: This is what readers determine is the emotion that influences that character's thoughts, actions, and words. This may be stated or inferred from the text.

Cole is angry to be left on the island and the circumstances that led him there, and he doesn't know how to release that anger other than destroying his shelter.

Character Traits/Characteristics: These are the ways that we describe the characters based on the observations of character thoughts, actions, words, and feelings. This is typically inferred from the text.

Cole is lonely and unable to process his emotions in ways that are healthy for him or others.

Character Motivation: This is what encourages the character to persevere or even change throughout the story. This typically requires you to infer based on your character observations.

Cole's near death experience motivates him to change his behavior, beginning by telling the truth because he realizes that his actions are the reason for the consequences he faces.

Directions:

1. As you read your choice text (whether fiction or nonfiction) track these observations and inferences on your tracking sheet about two main characters.
2. This center activity may take multiple days to complete.

This activity has been adapted from Kate Roberts' *A Novel Approach*.

Analyzing Characters in My Choice Reading

Name:

Text Title:

	Character:	Character:
Character Actions & Speech (Observations)		
Character Feelings (Observation or Inference)		
Character Traits/Characteristics (Inference)		
Character Motivation (Inference)		

READING: Theme Ideas

Literacy Objective:

Determine two possible theme ideas during choice fiction reading.

Review the following definition of theme along with the example and non-example to refresh the concept of theme in your mind.

Theme: a moral, lesson, or message of a story meant for readers to discover and learn from with the characters

Let's review this idea from our class novel, *Freak the Mighty*:

	Theme Idea	3 Word Statement	Sophisticated Theme Idea
Example	Storytelling	Storytelling helps healing.	Storytelling can help people cope and heal from difficult experiences by understanding their own experiences.
Non-example	Storytelling	Max writes stories.	Max wrote his story to help him understand his experiences with Kevin and his dad.

What differences do you notice between the example and non-example?

- The example is universal -- it can be applied to other stories and our lives!
- The non-example has specific details from the story.

Directions:

1. Read your choice fiction text for about 15 minutes. While reading, identify two theme ideas that your book might be about.
2. When there are 5-10 minutes left of this station, complete the Theme Idea chart to demonstrate what your text might be teaching you about the themes.

This activity has been adapted from Kate Roberts' *A Novel Approach*.

Theme Ideas in My Choice Reading

Name:

Text Title:

Theme Idea	3 Word Statement	Sophisticated Theme Idea
Storytelling	Storytelling helps healing.	Storytelling can help people cope and heal from difficult experiences by understanding their own experiences.

Other important observations:

READING: Topic, Main Idea, and Supporting Details

Literacy Objective:

Describe the main idea and supporting details of a text.

“Topics and Main Ideas”: View this YouTube video from Mometrix Academy to refresh how we identify topics and main ideas.



<https://youtu.be/ThskMeB1e5s>

Directions:


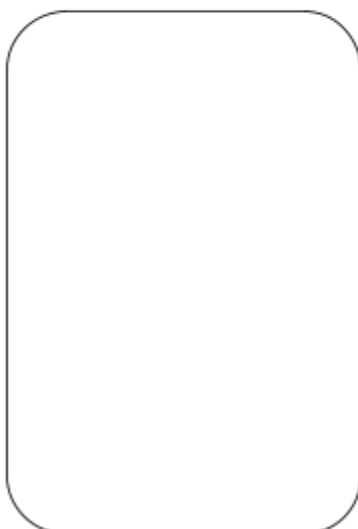
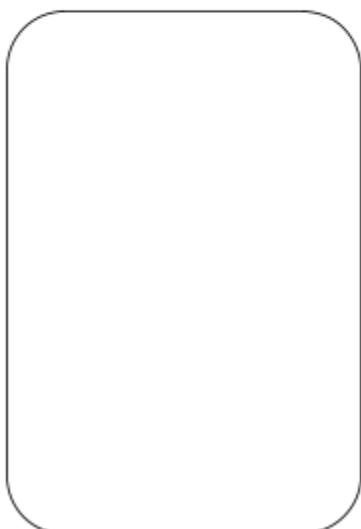
1. As you read your choice text (whether fiction or nonfiction) keep in mind how you will identify the topic, the main idea, and supporting details.
2. At the end of the text or the end of a chapter, stop to complete the Topic, Main Idea, and Supporting Details graphic organizer.
3. Identify the topic: Who or what is the text mainly about?
4. Identify the main idea: What is the text saying about the topic?
5. Identify supporting details: What specific information helped you identify the main idea?

Reading: Topic, Main Idea, and Supporting Details

Name:

Text Title:

Type of Text:

Topic: Who or what is the text mainly about?**Main Idea:** What is the text saying about the topic?**Supporting Details:** What specific information helped you identify the main idea?

RESEARCH: Identifying Bias

Literacy Objective:

Distinguish between facts and opinions to determine bias.

Review the following definitions of fact, opinion, and bias.

Fact: a thing that is known or proved to be true

Opinion: a view or judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge

Bias: prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair

Directions:

1. Choose a text to read from the available copies. You may be an active reader and choose to write on these.
2. As you read the text, record examples of both facts and opinions on the graphic organizer.
3. After reading the text, review the speaker's or writer's use of facts and opinions to determine if they presented a biased perspective.
4. If biased, determine what perspective is favored. If unbiased, determine how they were able to remain objective.

This activity has been adapted from Lynette Prevatte's *Middle School Literacy Centers*.

Texts from CommonLit

To access the following texts, you will need to create a free account on CommonLit.org. These texts are from their open library and filtered by grades 5th, 6th, and 7th and the categories Historical Document, Opinion, and Speech. Keep printed copies available for your students. If possible, laminate and use dry-erase markers.

Speeches	Opinions/Historical Articles
<u>“President Obama’s National Address to America’s Schoolchildren” by President Barack Obama</u>	<u>“A Quick Note on Getting Better at Difficult Things” by Ta-Nehisi Coates</u>
<u>“Steve Jobs’ Stanford University Commencement Speech” by Steve Jobs</u>	<u>“Putting Good Deeds in Headlines May Not be so Good” by Tovia Smith</u>
<u>“Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy on Young People and International Service” by John F. Kennedy</u>	<u>“Titanic Officer Swears Wreck due to Company’s Neglect” by United Press Leased Wire</u>

Research: Identifying Bias

Name:

Text Title:

Facts	Opinions

Does the speaker/writer indicate a bias to one perspective? **Yes** **No**

If **Yes**, what perspective is preferred and why?

If **No**, how did the speaker/writer maintain an unbiased perspective?

SMALL GROUP: Read Alouds

Teacher-Led Assessment

Literacy Objective:

Demonstrate their reading fluency and comprehension through read aloud.

Before you begin:


Identify base of student reading levels through a district assessment, such as state benchmarks or Renaissance Place's STAR Reading Assessment.

Create groups based on similar comprehension reading levels to determine small group placement for this assessment. Try to limit groups to 5 students or fewer.

Have copies of appropriate level texts (including both above and below how students tested) from Leslie & Caldwell's *Qualitative Reading Inventory*. Recommended to have these in a file that is easily accessible during the small group and levels are not indicated to students. Other leveled texts may be substituted from other district sources, CommonLit.org, or Newsela.com.

Have copies of the Read Aloud Tracking Chart for each group.

Directions:

1. Choose a text that should be appropriate for the group's independent reading level.
2. Using round round robin, have students read aloud a paragraph before the next student reads. As students are reading, take notes using initials and shortcuts to identify misspoken words, skipped words, and corrections. From QRI:
 - Substitution: write what the student said over the word as it appears in print. If possible, make note if the student used an image or background knowledge to identify the substitution
 - Omission: circle the omitted word
 - Insertion: write in the insertion and mark it with an editing insert mark
 - Self-correction: when a student corrects a miscue, still include the miscue and mark it with a C
 - Reversal: use a  to indicate the student transposes two words/phrases

This handout may be helpful in identifying independent, instructional, and frustration levels:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18-sbxhbDWhtUZ9V3NofNQot-nl6xuYVM/view?usp=sharing>

3. If it appears to be fluent and easy for them or too difficult, grab another leveled text to determine which level seems most appropriate.
4. Include a fluency rating with a 1-4 scale.

- 4 -- Phrasing is appropriate for the text. Most of the story is read with appropriate expression.
- 3 -- Phrasing is in three- or four- word groups. Little of the story is read with appropriate expression.
- 2 -- Phrasing is primarily two- or three-word groups. The story is read without appropriate expression.
- 1 -- Phrasing is awkward and does not allow for appropriate expression.
5. Use the note tracking sheet to record these student observations.
6. After finishing the passage, ask students to retell the passage that they read with their peers. Rate their comprehension level with a 1-4 scale:
- 4 -- Response indicates higher-level thinking or may build upon a peer's initial response.
- 3 -- Response indicates surface-level thinking.
- 2 -- Response requires additional prompting.
- 1 -- Response does not answer the question.
7. Ask general inferential questions and rate student responses. Example questions include:
- What does this show about the character?
 - What lesson can readers learn from this?
 - What do you notice about the style of writing?
8. After the session, review your observations to determine student strengths and weaknesses. These should be used when teaching small group lessons based on student needs in upcoming centers.

This activity has been adapted from Kate Roberts' *A Novel Approach* and read aloud texts from Leslie & Caldwell's *Qualitative Reading Inventory*.

Small Group: Read Alouds

Text/Level:

Initials					
----------	--	--	--	--	--

Fluency

Errors					
Accuracy					
Fluency Rating					

Comprehension

Rating					
Notes					

Inferences

Rating					
Notes					

Overall

Strengths					
Weaknesses					

SMALL GROUP: Skills Assessment

Teacher-Led Assessment

Literacy Objective:

Demonstrate their strengths of four reading skills: identifying importance, character analysis, interpretation, and author's craft.

Before you begin:

Choose a text/book appropriate for students to read easily. Options can include:

- Have copies of an engaging short story.
- Students may choose a choice book.
- You can have multiple copies for students so students may choose to read the book independently or in a small group after this assessment.
- This could be completed with the first chapter of a class novel and as a whole group lesson too.

Have copies of Student Reading Questions.

Have a copy of the Skill Assessment Grid to sort student responses.

Directions:

1. Have the students read the assigned text, whether determined by you or them. Then instruct them to answer the four questions to the best of their ability with complete sentences.
2. Each question is focused on a specific reading skill: identifying importance, character analysis, interpretation, and author's craft.
3. Collect student responses and sort by the strengths of their answers into three levels: beginning (1), intermediate (2), and advanced (3).
4. Record student names on the Skill Assessment Grid. This will help identify not only individual student mini-lesson needs, but also focus for whole-class texts and units.

This activity has been adapted from Kate Roberts' *A Novel Approach*.

Small Group: Student Reading Questions

Name:

Text:

1. What are the three most important moments in this chapter/story?
2. How did the character adapt or change?
3. What theme was introduced in this chapter/story?
4. What did you notice about the writing style and purpose of this chapter/story?

Small Group: Skill Assessment Grid

Skill	1	2	3
Determining Importance			
Character Analysis			
Interpretation (Theme, symbols, etc.)			
Analyzing Craft			

VOCABULARY: Bananagrams and Dictionary Practice

Literacy Objective:

Use alphabetic awareness and reference materials to write words.

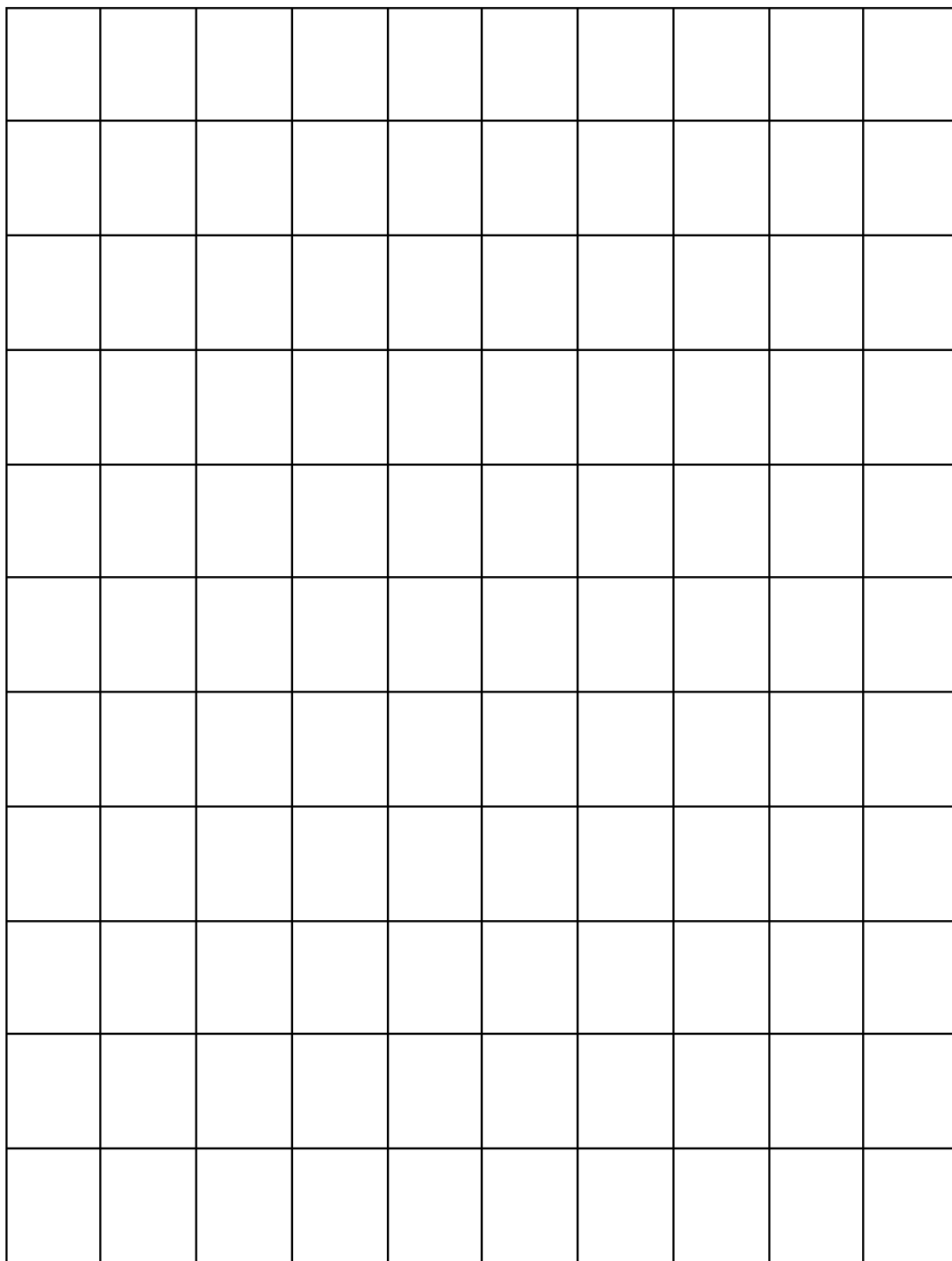
“How to Use a Dictionary”: View this YouTube video from Heidi Neltner to refresh how we use a dictionary.



<https://youtu.be/yKflEg11S6g>

Directions:

1. Place all of the Bananagram tiles facedown in the center of the table.
2. Place the grid paper in front of you. You may place your tiles on this grid paper to help keep your words organized.
3. Each person should draw 15 tiles and turn them face up.
4. Using a dictionary, determine a starting word to put in the center of your grid. The longer your word, the more options you will have in building your word grid.
5. For every letter tile you use, you draw the same number of letters to replace them.
6. At the end of center time, you must either take a picture of your word grid or write the words on your paper grid to put in your center folder.



VOCABULARY: List-Group-Label

Literacy Objective:

Recognize relationships between words and concepts.

Being able to organize and categorize words demonstrates your ability to identify definitions and understanding of a text.

Directions:

1. Choose a nonfiction article that interests you to read.
2. While reading, write down words and phrases that are important to understanding the information in the article. These may be words and phrases that you know or do not know the meanings of.
3. After reading, review the important words and phrases so that you can group these words into three categories based on related words or similarities of ideas that you noticed while reading.
4. After the words and phrases have been sorted, create a category title for each one.
5. Explain why you created the categories that you did.
6. If a peer read the same article as you, compare their words and categories to your own. Reflect to see why that peer may or may not have grouped words in a similar way.

This activity has been adapted from Katherine S. McKnight's *Literacy & Learning Centers for the Big Kids*.

List-Group-Label

Name:

Article Title:

Write down words or phrases that are important to understanding the nonfiction article.

--

Now group these words into three categories based on related words or similarities that you noticed while reading. After they have been sorted, create a category title for each one.

Explain why you chose to categorize the words in the groups that you did.

Compare your response to that of a classmate. Did they group their words in a similar way or different? Why do you think that is?

Articles from NewsELA

To access the following texts, you will need to create a free account on Newsela.com. These texts are from their library and you may choose to print articles at varying grade levels for your students. Keep printed copies available for your students to annotate. If possible, laminate and use dry-erase markers.

[“Study suggests video games can help mental health” by Associated Press, 2020](#)

[“Warning! Junk foods can harm a teen’s brain” by Sharon Oosthoek, 2020](#)

[“What teenage brains can teach us about thinking creatively” by Washington Post, 2020](#)

[“Research says exercise works out the brain as well as the body” by Chicago Tribune, 2015](#)

[“Music and how it affects our emotions” by Cricket Media, 2019](#)

VOCABULARY Chips: Synonyms and Antonyms

Literacy Objective:

Develop understanding of word relationships between synonyms and antonyms.

Read the following definitions of synonyms and antonyms to refresh what they are before compiling examples of each.

Synonym: a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language, for example shut is a synonym of close.

Antonym: a word opposite in meaning to another (e.g. bad and good).

Directions:

1. Read through a writing assignment of your own or a classmate's and create a collection of SIX common words.
2. List each word at the top of each "paint chip".
3. Underneath the original word, discover FOUR synonyms for that word and organize them from least descriptive to most.

You may discover synonyms by thinking of your own examples or by using a thesaurus, either a reference book or online.

4. In the last box, with the opposite color, put an antonym for this collection of words.

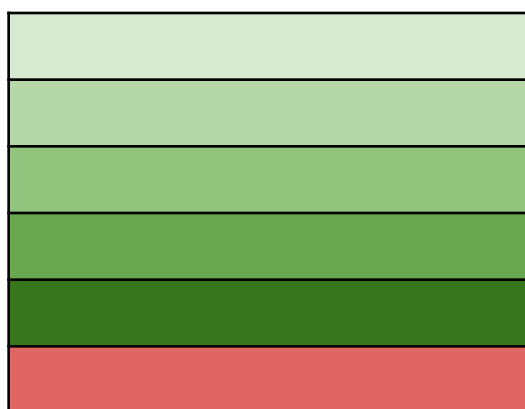
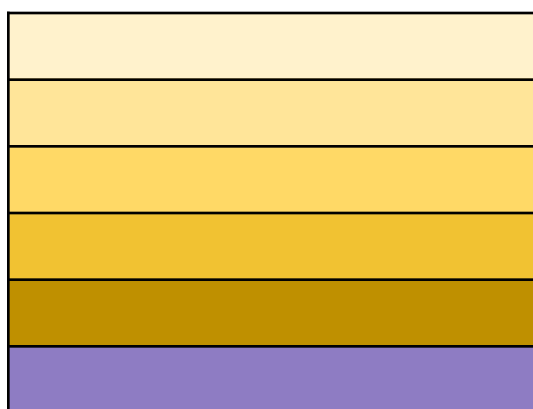
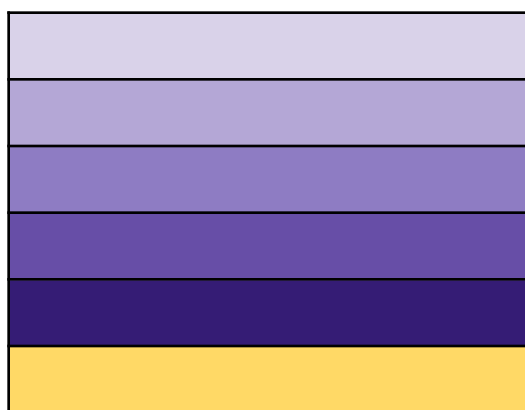
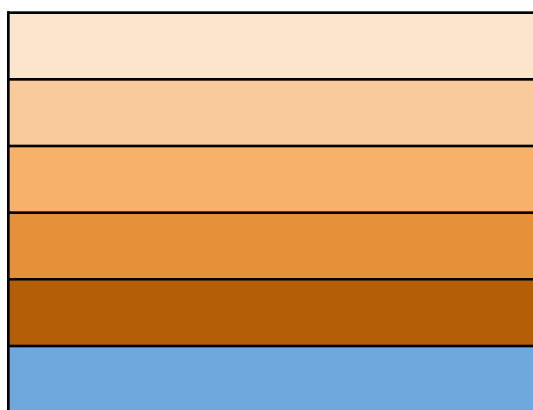
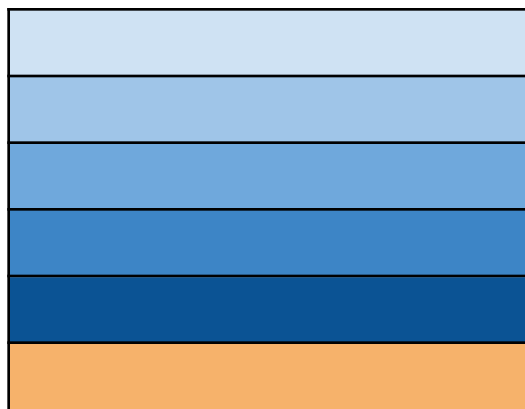
Example:

friendship
fondness
affection
love
devotion
dislike

This activity has been adapted from Katherine S. McKnight's *Literacy & Learning Centers for the Big Kids*.

Vocabulary Chips: Synonyms & Antonyms

Name:



VOCABULARY: Word Root Finds with Stories and Poems

Literacy Objective:

Identify meaning of unknown words using common word root definitions.

English Root Words: View this YouTube video from Miacademy Learning Channel to refresh what root words are and how we can use them to determine word meanings.



<https://youtu.be/jWyX8vl6kMs>

Directions:

1. Use the Common Word Roots handout as a reference, so set it to the side where it is visible.
2. Choose a story or a poem to read.
3. Read through the text once for a basic understanding and underline unknown words.
4. In the first column, list the title of your text.
5. In the second column, record the unknown words on your Root Word Finds.
6. Use the Common Word Roots handout to put a CIRCLE around any identified roots within the word.
7. In the third column, write what you think the possible definition could be for the unknown word.
8. Repeat this exercise with another story/poem until the center time is complete.

Common Word Roots

Root	Definition	Example words
ab	away	Absence, absolute, absorb
auto	self	Automatic, autobiography, automobile
arch	ruler	Archrival, hierarchy, monarch
ben/bon	good	Benign, bounteous, beneficiary
bio	life	Biography, biology, antibiotic
chron	time	Chronic, chronological, synchronize
co	together	Cooperate, coworker, cohesive
cor	heart	Accord, cordial, courage
contra	against	Contrast, contrary, contradict
cred	To believe	Credential, credible, discredit
curr/curs/cours	To run	Current, courier, occur
dict	To say/declare	Benediction, contradict, dictator
dis	Apart, not	Disquiet, disaffected, disconnect
flect/flex	To bend	Reflect, deflect, flexible
gen	Birth or origin	Genuine, generic, indigenous
graph	write	Photograph, autograph, calligraphy
mal	bad	Malicious, malnutrition, malignant
manu	hand	Manufacture, manual, manipulate

min	Small, less than	Mince, minion, diminish
miss/mitt	To send	Transmit, omit, permit
mob/mot	To move	Commotion, remote, unmotivated
ped/pod	foot	Pedicure, podiatrist, tripod
phil	love	Bibliophile, philanthropist, philosophy
re	again	Reflect, refrain, revert
struct	To build	Infrastructure, reconstruct, destructive
tele	Far away	Telepathic, telecast, teleport
vers/vert	To turn	Adversary, convert, versatile
vis/vid	To look, see	Evident, visionary, vista

Some roots retrieved from Prevatte, L. (2007). *Middle school literacy centers: Connecting struggling readers to literature*.

Stories & Poems from CommonLit

To access the following texts, you will need to create a free account on CommonLit.org. These texts are from their open library and filtered by 7th grade. Keep printed copies available for your students to underline. If possible, laminate and use dry-erase markers.

Short Stories	Poems
<u>"Thank You, M'am" by Langston Hughes</u>	<u>"Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Lawrence Thayer</u>
<u>"Examination Day" by Henry Slesar</u>	<u>"Knock Knock" by Daniel Beaty</u>
<u>"Amigo Brothers" by Piri Thomas</u>	<u>"The Blind Men and the Elephant" by John Godfrey Saxe</u>
<u>"Cinderella" by Charles Perrault</u>	<u>"Twice I Walked with Dinosaurs" by Camryn Diagonale</u>
<u>"The Griffin and the Minor Canon" by Frank R. Stockton</u>	<u>"Momentum" by Catherine Doty</u>

Root Word Finds

Name:

Story/Poem	Word	Possible Definition
"Thank You, M'am"	combined	Co means "together" so it could mean working together

WRITING: Create a Backstory

Literacy Objective:

Examine an image to compose a fictional backstory.

Can you “read” an image? Absolutely! You can use your observations and clues in the images to draw inferences about the subjects in photographs and images. You can practice this skill by paying close attention to details in the image and use those to inspire you to write a story for the “character” pictured.

Have fun trying this!

Directions:

1. Review the images available and choose one that captures your attention.
2. “Read” the photograph and take notes about what stands out to you and what seems important.
3. Read the caption. How does this change your understanding of the photograph? When you begin your story, you may choose whether you want to include the reported information or if you’d prefer to write a completely fictional story.
4. Prepare a Google Doc to write your story for the pictured character.
5. Write a story for the character! How did he/she/they get to that point? What will they do after this photo?



Image 1. Maggie Gee was one of 1,074 Women Airforce Service pilots in World War II. Photo: Elaine Harmon



Image 1. Sarah Emma Evelyn Edmonds Seelye (1841-1898), who also went by Franklin Thompson, spied on the Confederacy using many different male and female disguises. She deserted the army in 1863 and became a war nurse using the name Sarah Edmonds. Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images.



Image 1. A pair of chihuahuas at Street Tails Animal Rescue shelter in Philadelphia wear bow ties made by Darius Brown. Photo: Street Tails



An Australian Koala looks at a camera as it sits atop a branch in its enclosure at Wild Life Sydney Zoo in Australia, April 3, 2014. Reuters/David Gray



Image 1. Jordan Ramey, 10, gets a short lesson in how to play "Happy Birthday" from teacher Kirsten Daulton as part of the Pianos in the Parks program, July 12, 2018, at McKinley Park in Chicago, Illinois. Photo: Erin Hooley/Chicago Tribune/TNS



Image 1. When someone throws a football, the nose of the ball turns and follows the football's path as it curves through the air. Now scientists understand how this works. Photo: Hill Street Studios/ Getty Images. Altered by Newsela staff.



Kip Clark offers human connection through listening. From his seat on the steps of a building at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Massachusetts, he offers to listen to anything anyone wants to tell him. Photo: Melanie Stetson Freeman/Christian Science Monitor



Image 1. Michael Platt makes a lemon cake at his home in Bowie, Maryland. The 13-year-old started Michaels Desserts and gives away one cupcake to the homeless for every one he sells. Photo by: Katherine Frey/The Washington Post

WRITING: Inspiration Draws

Literacy Objective:

Write a creative story using character and plot prompts.

Sometimes there is a lot of pressure to get our writing “just right.” However, this is also what can cause writer's block. We want to build a habit of continuing to write through our thoughts even when we are unsure or lack confidence because we can always use the revising process to go back and improve! This only works if we work through our struggles and keep going. Practice this strategy to help improve your writing stamina!

“Plot Prompts”: View this YouTube video from MonthOfTheNovel to see a similar version of this strategy in practice.



<https://youtu.be/rGp-iLUfLiE>

Directions:

1. Create a Google Doc to write your story. Title it: Inspiration Draw Story
2. To begin your story, draw two or three characters to be in your story.
3. Draw an initial conflict for your character(s) to face. You may choose which of your initial characters is the protagonist. The other may be another major character or an antagonist.
4. Begin writing your story!
5. Keep writing until you feel writer's block set in. . . and then draw a continuing plot prompt to keep you going!
6. You may choose to revisit this center to continue your story as needed.

This activity has been adapted from MonthOfTheNovel's' *Plot Prompts - Month of the Novel: Episode 3*.

Writing: Inspiration Draws

Each rectangle should be cut out but remain in the same column. Each column represents a zipper pouch that each prompt should be part of.

Characters	Initial Conflict	Continuing Plot Prompts
Unnamed aliens from outer space	Your character(s) are trapped in an elevator. How do they react?	Have a character express a dislike of something
A character from your favorite cartoon	You character(s) are about to make a life changing discovery. What is it?	Deliver tragic news
A close family member	People were beginning to no longer follow the laws and rules of the land . . .	Reveal a character's secret wishes
A famous sports star (alive or deceased)	The main character must move away. Why? Where are they going?	Have a character start an argument
Your favorite animal	Your character has ended up in the hospital. How did they get there?	Have a character get confused
Villian in the last movie you watched	Your character has won the lottery. What problems will he/she/they have?	Have a character turn evil
A wise old man/woman	Your character has lost something very important. What was it?	Have a character get in an accident
A teenager stuck in an animal's body (you choose which type of animal)	Your character has embarrassed himself/herself in the lunchroom. What happened?	Have a character do something embarrassing
Singer of the last song you listened to	Your character has just been called to the office. Why? What will happen?	Have a character get bad advice
An inanimate object that can speak	Your character has suddenly woken up 10 years in the future. What has changed?	Have a character hear a song and it changes their mood (for better or worse)

WRITING: Organizing an Argument

Literacy Objective:

Organize and write an argument.

Hmmm... how can you persuade others to share an opinion with you or to act a certain way?
You must give explanations and examples to convince them!

This skill takes practice and it is important to organize your thoughts and examples before you begin writing. One way we can do this is to create a graphic organizer.

Check out some of these possible topics from Thought Co.:

- All students should have daily chores.
- Every home should have a pet.
- Every student should play a musical instrument.
- Homework should be banned.
- School uniforms should be required.
- Year-round education is better for students.
- Children should not be allowed to drink soda.
- PE should be required of all students throughout middle and high school.
- All students should be required to volunteer in the community.
- Zoos should be abolished.
- Science fiction is the best form of fiction (or any form of fiction of your choosing).
- Macs are better than PCs.
- Androids are better than iPhones.
- All students should be required to take a cooking class.
- All students should be required to take a shop or practical arts class.
- All students should be required to take a performing arts class.
- All students should be required to learn sewing.
- All citizens should be required to vote.
- Sports stars are paid too much money.
- Grades should be abolished.
- Video games are too violent.
- Students should be required to learn about poetry.
- English is the most important subject in school.

Is there one you strongly agree with or against? Organize an argument!

Directions:

1. Choose a statement above that you either agree or disagree with strongly. Have another topic in mind? Try it!
2. Determine your claim and write it on the graphic organizer.
3. Determine three main points to support your claim. These should be overall observations, not specifics (yet).
4. For each main point, prepare both specific explanations and examples that demonstrate your stance.
5. Next, take your ideas and write them out in paragraphs! Each main point should be a paragraph on it's own. This keeps your ideas organized and focused.

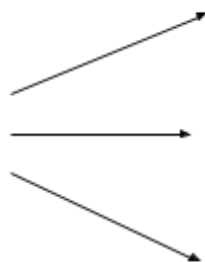
This activity has been adapted from Katherine S. McKnight's *Literacy and Learning Centers for the Big Kids*.

Organizing an Argument

Name:

What is your topic and claim?

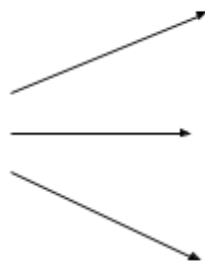
Point #1



Explanations and/or Examples

Three empty rounded rectangular boxes stacked vertically, intended for providing explanations and/or examples for Point #1.

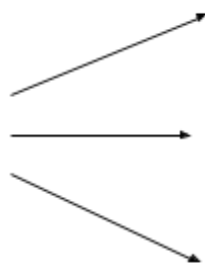
Point #2



Explanations and/or Examples

Three empty rounded rectangular boxes stacked vertically, intended for providing explanations and/or examples for Point #2.

Point #3



Explanations and/or Examples

Three empty rounded rectangular boxes stacked vertically, intended for providing explanations and/or examples for Point #3.

WRITING: Write a Letter

Literacy Objective:

Write a letter to either inform or persuade your audience.

It's your choice: Write an informative friendly letter or a persuasive business letter. Check out the helpful YouTube videos below to help you decide which style of letter you're going to write.

Friendly Letter	Business Letter
 https://youtu.be/Qw3c5FRyBm4	 https://youtu.be/MsUBAkrFRKo

Directions:

1. Choose what type of letter you would like to write: Friendly or Business.
2. Decide who you will write your letter to. For a friendly letter, you may choose to write to a friend or a family member. For a business letter, you will want to choose someone you would like to do or change something; for example, if you have an idea for a science experiment, you could write a letter to your science teacher or if you have concerns about a policy at school you may write to your principal. You can also write to authors, actors/actresses, state representatives, and more!
3. Create a Google Doc to type your letter. Save it with an easy to remember title.
4. Set up your letter in the correct format, either friendly or business.
5. Write a rough draft of your letter. It should be less than one page.
6. Take the time to edit your letter for spelling and grammar.
7. Address an envelope to your recipient. Yes, you can actually mail it! (Just save the copy of the letter in your Google Drive in case you want to include this on your Portfolio.)

This activity has been adapted from Jill Catherine Franke's "Learning Centers for Reading in Junior High."

Writing: Write a Letter
Addressing an Envelope

Sender's Name Return Address City, State #####	STAMP
Recipient's Name Address City, State #####	

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