



READING

In grade 6, 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 more questions that will require him to refer back to what he has read. There will be an increased emphasis on building a strong vocabulary so that your child can read and understand more challenging material. Your child will be expected to demonstrate his understanding of the material by answering questions and contributing to class discussions. He will also be expected to integrate information from different sources and respond to challenging content through written interpretation and analysis. Activities in these areas include:

- Citing evidence from the text in the form of specific details or examples to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly.
- Reading, analyzing and annotating a text for evidence of the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in a text.
- Reading, analyzing and annotating a text for evidence that shows similarities and differences in two or more authors' presentations of the same events.



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

- Ask questions to clarify meaning.
- “Prove” an opinion by referring to specific information in the text.
- Make educated guesses about the thoughts and background of characters.
- “Read between the lines” of the text to infer things that are not specifically stated.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Help your child develop a “color-coded” system for reading. Use different colored highlighters to mark main ideas, stated evidence, and information that helps your child imply things that are not stated (inferences).
- ▶ Encourage your child to ask questions as he reads.

VOCABULARY

INFERENCES are conclusions a reader draws from text when the information is not specifically stated. Authors do not always TELL you everything! Sometimes, readers must use clues and experience to make guesses as they read. This is called making an inference.

Your child can determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details. Your child can provide a summary of the text based upon this determination.

- Find the lesson, theme, or central idea the author is trying to get across.
- Make connections based on prior knowledge.
- Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraphed text.

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 him whether or not the speaker was trying to convince the audience of something. How was the speaker attempting to do so (what kind of words, details, etc. did the speaker use)?



Your child can describe how the plot of a literary text unfolds in a series of episodes, as well as how the characters respond to and/or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

- Identify basic story elements as well as major events and challenges within a story.
- Identify the characters in the story and how they are connected to one another.
- Identify the cause and effect or the problem and solution of the actions, events, or steps in a story and how they relate to the main topic.

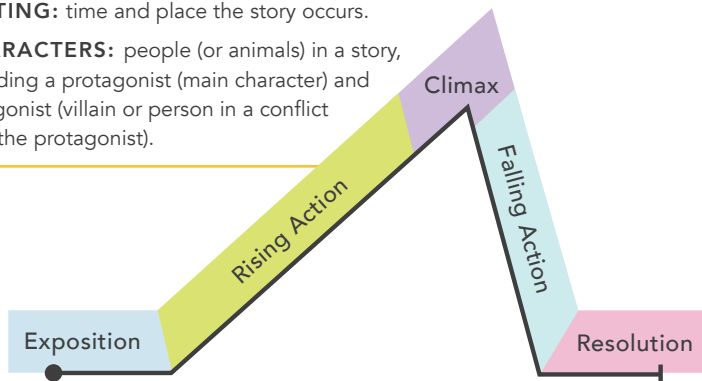
HELP AT HOME

► Practice analyzing the plot with your child by discussing his favorite TV shows or movies. Ask him to identify the setting, characters, problem/conflict, climax, and resolution. This allows him to relate the common elements of plot to every “story,” whether told orally, read in a text, or watched on a screen.

BASIC STORY ELEMENTS

Basic story elements include the following:

- **PLOT:** the series of events that happen in the story.
- **EXPOSITION:** beginning of the story; introduces characters, setting, and tone.
- **RISING ACTION:** problems arise in the story.
- **CLIMAX:** the high point, or most exciting part of a story.
- **FALLING ACTION:** action that follows the climax; leads to the end.
- **RESOLUTION:** problems are solved; action comes to an end.
- **THEME:** message about life; what the main character learns.
- **SETTING:** time and place the story occurs.
- **CHARACTERS:** people (or animals) in a story, including a protagonist (main character) and antagonist (villain or person in a conflict with the protagonist).



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 a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

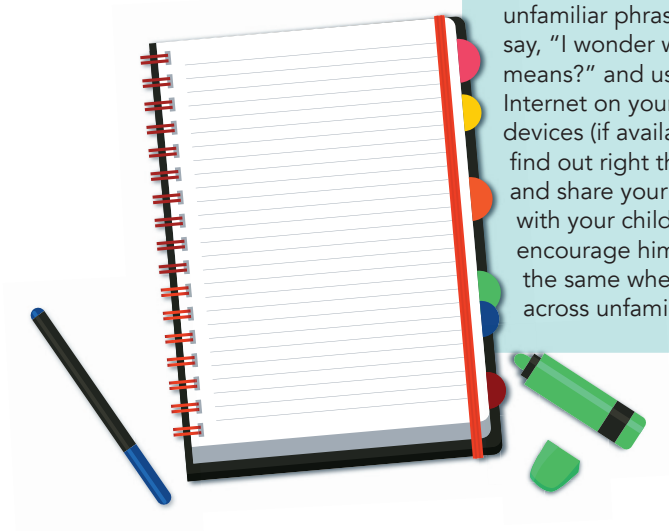
- Understand that some words/phrases have literal meanings and different figurative meanings.
- Understand the impact of an author's word choice on the tone of the story.

VOCABULARY

A **CONNOTATIVE MEANING** is the feeling suggested by a word or phrase. For example, would you rather *trudge* down the road or *stroll* down the road? These verbs have similar meanings but each has a different connotative meaning. *Trudge* connotes a struggle, but *stroll* connotes a relaxing walk.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Encourage your child to keep a vocabulary notebook. In the notebook, your child can make note of words or phrases that are unfamiliar as he reads. Have your child draw doodles and other images to help him memorize the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Then ask your child about the words later or use reference materials to look them up.
- ▶ Model the “vocabulary notebook” for your child. When you hear an unfamiliar phrase or word, say, “I wonder what _____ means?” and use the Internet on your mobile devices (if available) to find out right then, and share your findings with your child. This will encourage him to do the same when he comes across unfamiliar terms.



Your child can analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

- Understand that particular sentences, chapters, scenes, etc. have an impact on how the story might change or continue.
- Understand why things must happen in a certain order in the story.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Encourage your child to use a simplified “text coding” system as he reads. This visual connection to the text will assist your child when going back to search for text evidence.
 - “+” can be used to mark when new information is revealed.
 - “!” might indicate something surprising or dramatic.
 - “?” can be used to mark information that is not understood.
 - “X” can indicate that the reader disagrees with something he has read.



VOCABULARY

STANZAS occur in poetry and songs and are usually grouped together by rhyme pattern and/or the number of lines. In any given song you have unknowingly sung stanzas, which are known as “verses.”



Your child can explain how the author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a fiction text, or how the author develops his own point of view in a nonfiction text.

- Identify what kinds of words, vocabulary, and dialect the narrator or author uses.
- Determine what background information about the narrator or author is given to the reader.

VOCABULARY

FICTION is a story created in one’s imagination.

NONFICTION is a true story about real people and real events.

DIALECT is a form of language spoken in a particular region and uses its own words, grammar, pronunciations, etc. Some examples of dialect include:

- Y’ALL (Southern) : you all
- MON (Jamaican): man
- CAH (East Coast): car
- FRANKS (Western): hot dogs

POINT OF VIEW

Point of view is the viewpoint from which the story is told.

FIRST PERSON

The character is telling the story from his point of view. Clue Words: I, we.

SECOND PERSON

The author directly addresses the reader as “you.” This viewpoint is rare.

THIRD PERSON

A person not involved in the actual story is telling the story. Clue Words: he, she, they.

THIRD PERSON OMNISCIENT

A person outside the action is telling the story but also knows the thoughts and feelings of the characters.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Compare characters in books, TV shows, and movies to people you know in real life and have your child do the same. Have him explain why the two people are similar.
- ▶ Encourage your child to use the “Most Important Thing” strategy. When reading, have him list two important ideas about the author’s point of view or perspective and how much it impacts the reader. Then, have your child list the most important thing he learned from the text. This will assist him in making the connection between the author’s point of view and how it impacts what readers learn from the text.



Your child can compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the story, including contrasting what he “sees” and “hears” when reading the text to what he perceives when he listens or watches.

- Determine if the actors in the live version of a story fit with their description as written in the original text.
- Decide what is different in the live version from how it was pictured in your mind while reading, and why.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Take your child to see a musical or play version of a text you have both read. Discuss with your child the way the props, music, costumes, and actors’ movements and voices bring the story to life. Discuss how the lighting or background music changes from scene to scene? Why?
- ▶ When watching the film version of a story, discuss with your child whether or not the actors and scenery “look” like he imagined they would? Ask questions such as: How are they different, and why would the director have made that decision? Are certain parts of the story left out of the movie? Why did the director choose to leave that particular scene out?



Your child can compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

- Compare stories and poems on historical events such as the Civil Rights Movement or the Holocaust. Determine how do the authors use different approaches to convey similar information.
- Look for historical fiction texts, newspaper reports, or song lyrics that deal with the same event in a different form.
- Read biographies and autobiographies on the same person.



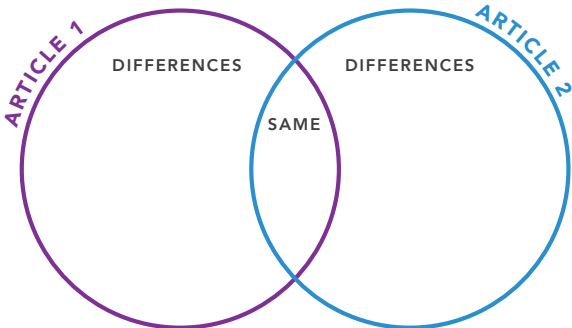
RESOURCES

SAMPLE VENN DIAGRAM
Using a sheet of notebook paper or construction paper, make a simple Venn diagram for your child to complete after he reads two articles.

Graphic representations of a Venn Diagram and a T-chart can be found on the Internet.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Suggest a variety of reading passages surrounding a common historical event that interests your child (e.g., the Hindenburg Disaster, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War) in order to help your child see how different authors vary in their approach to the same theme. Some of the passages should be informational and some should be fictional.
- ▶ Have your child construct a T-Chart or Venn Diagram showing the similarities and differences of the passages read and discuss how the information is presented. How do different authors and their backgrounds affect the way the information is relayed to the reader?



By the end of the year, your child can read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, poems, and literary nonfiction, in the grades 6-8 complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

- Encourage your child to read as challenging of material as he can comprehend.
- Offer incentives as his reading level increases throughout the year.
- Supply nonfiction texts, such as articles and magazines, about topics that interest your child.
- Provide texts that describe how things work and why.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Have your child use the “3 R’s” when reading - Read, Rate, Reread.
 - Do three careful, thoughtful readings of short passages.
 - Have your child self-evaluate after each reading (e.g., What is understood or still unclear? What questions do I have? Did I miss something the first time?).

Having your child self-evaluate and monitor his own comprehension increases his level of reading success, and independence.

- ▶ Assist your child in acquiring a public library card and help him use it often. Encourage your child to spend time each day reading a fictional series or informative piece that interests him. Set aside 20-30 minutes of “quiet” time each day that is spent with the entire family reading. It is important that your child sees you demonstrate reading. If it is important to you, it will be important to your child.



Your child can trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

- Distinguish whether or not the author uses facts in his writing or merely opinions.
- Determine the main purpose of the text and if the author is trying to persuade the reader to think or do something.

VOCABULARY

SLANTED TEXTS are written based on unproven claims or author's opinions. Explain to your child that he cannot believe everything that is read and to make sure an author provides enough good evidence to make his case.

HELP AT HOME

- ▶ Have your child review the title of the page of a book. Ask him questions about the text, such as: What does the title suggest? What is the publication date? Is it based on the most recent information available? What kind of credentials does the author have to write about this topic? Is the author considered an "expert" in this field?
- ▶ Watch an infomercial with your child. How is the actor or representative trying to persuade the viewers to buy the product? Who is the product targeted for? Is the price fair? Do you think the product will work?

