
WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY SEVENTH GRADE STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 1?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: Identity in the Middle Ages

Module 2: Americans All

Module 3: Language and Power

Module 4: Fever

In this first module, *Identity in the Middle Ages*, students are introduced to the daily lives of medieval Europeans. Immersed in the Middle Ages (500–1500 AD), students focus on identity and character and the impact of society on both.

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE TEXTS:

Novel

- *Castle Diary*, Richard Platt
- *The Midwife's Apprentice*, Karen Cushman
- *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer, retold by Geraldine McCaughrean

Poetry

- "Identity," Julio Noboa Polanco

OUR CLASS WILL EXAMINE THESE WORKS OF ART:

- *Joachim Among the Shepherds*, Giotto di Bondone
- *Pilgrims Leaving Canterbury*, From Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*
- *The Three Living and The Three Dead*, Master of the Dresden Prayer Book

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- How does society influence identity and experience?
- What do *The Canterbury Tales* reveal about identity and storytelling?
- In *The Midwife's Apprentice*, how does the protagonist's identity change over time?
- What elements make for an engaging historical narrative?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME:

As your seventh grade student reads, ask:

- *What do you notice and wonder?*

BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver*, E.L. Konigsburg
- *The Door in the Wall*, Marguerite de Angeli
- *Adam of the Road*, Elizabeth Janet Gray
- *Catherine Called Birdy*, Karen Cushman
- *The Kite Fighters*, Linda Sue Park
- *A Single Shard*, Linda Sue Park
- *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction*, David Macaulay
- *Traveling Man: Journey of Ibn Battuta 1325-1354*, James Rumford
- *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village*, Laura Amy Schlitz
- *The Royal Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay: Life in Medieval Africa*, Patricia McKissack and Frederick McKissack

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSING SOCIETY AND IDENTITY (AND THE MIDDLE AGES):

You can talk about identity and society at any time, any where. Ask:

- *How do you think our society influences your identity?*
- *How does our society differ from the Middle Ages?*
- *If you wrote a historical narrative about our society, who would be the characters? Where would it take place?*

WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 2?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: Identity in the Middle Ages

Module 2: Americans All

Module 3: Language and Power

Module 4: Fever

In this second module, *Americans All*, students will explore how we react when faced with war. The World War II experiences of Japanese Americans and Native Americans show how the war impacted Americans in different ways. Students ask, *How did World War II affect individuals?*

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE TEXTS:

Memoir

- *Farewell to Manzanar*, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston

Novel

- *Code Talker*, Joseph Bruchac

Biography

- “Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.,” Alexis O’Neill

Historical Account

- “Navajo Code Talkers,” Harry Gardiner
- “Pearl Harbor and World War II,” Brandon Marie Miller and Mark Clemens
- “Relocation Camps,” Craig Blohm
- “World War II Internment of Japanese Americans,” Alan Taylor

Articles

- Pearl Harbor Headlines

Music

- “A Beautiful Dawn,” Radmilla Cody

OUR CLASS WILL EXAMINE THESE WORKS OF ART:

Photography

- *Manzanar from Guard Tower*, Ansel Adams
- *Photograph of Flag Raising on Iwo Jima, 02/23/1945*, Joe Rosenthal
- *Roy Takeno, outside Free Press Office*, Ansel Adams
- *School Children*, Ansel Adams

Poster

- “Americans All”
- “United We Win”

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- What does being Navajo mean to the protagonist of *Code Talker*?
- How does Ned’s Navajo identity provide strength during times of challenge?
- What did the Wakatsukis experience during World War II and how did it affect them?
- How did World War II affect individuals?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME:

As your seventh-grade student reads, ask:

- *What’s happening?*
- *What does a closer look at words and illustrations reveal about this text’s deeper meaning?*

BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *Eddie’s War*, Carol Fisher Saller
- *Weedflower*, Cynthia Kadohata
- *Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and the Librarian Who Made a Difference*, Joanne Oppenheim
- *Courage Has No Color*, Tanya Lee Stone
- *Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of WWII*, J. Todd Moyer

- *Milkweed*, Jerry Spinelli
- *Hana's Suitcase: The Quest to Solve a Holocaust Mystery*, Karen Levine
- *The Boy on the Wooden Box*, Leon Leyson

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSING WORLD WAR II

Watch movies together that depict the experiences of various Americans during World War II, such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Bridge on the River Kwai*, and *The Battle of Midway*. Ask:

- *What do the characters' identities mean to them during this difficult time?*
- *How did the characters' experiences during World War II affect them?*
- *How did World War II affect these individuals?*

WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY GRADE 7 STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 3?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: Identity in the Middle Ages

Module 2: Americans All

Module 3: Language and Power

Module 4: Fever

In the third module, *Language and Power*, students have many rich and engaging opportunities to explore the power of language to inspire, persuade, and control. Throughout, students ask: What is the power of language?

OUR CLASS WILL READ AND VIEW THESE TEXTS:

Novel (Literary)

- *Animal Farm*, George Orwell

Poetry

- “‘B’ (If I Should Have a Daughter,” Sarah Kay (text and video)
- “‘Hope’ is the thing with feathers—,” Emily Dickinson (text and video)
- “Dreams,” Langston Hughes (text and video)
- “Caged Bird,” Maya Angelou (text and video)
- “First They Came for the Communists,” Martin Niemoller

Speeches

- Inaugural Address, John F. Kennedy (text and video)
- Address to the United Nations Youth Assembly, Malala Yousafzai (text and video)
- “I Have a Dream,” Martin Luther King, Jr. (text and video)

Articles

- “‘Ask Not...’: JFK’s Words Still Inspire 50 Years Later,” Nathan Rott
- “Thanks to Malala: Top 3 Ways Malala Has Changed the World,” Alex Harris

- “Is Martin Luther King’s ‘I Have a Dream’ the Greatest in History?” Emma Mason
- “How Advertising Targets Our Children,” Perri Klass

Historical Accounts

- Excerpts from “Friedrich Engels, Revolutionary, Activist, Unionist, and Social Instigator,” Cricket Media
- Excerpts from “Grandeur at Abu Simbel,” Steven Snape
- Excerpts from “Let’s Tour the Temple,” Ramadan B. Hussein

Book Reviews

- “In 1946, the *New Republic* Panned George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*,” George Soule
- Review of *Animal Farm*, Michael Berry
- Review of *Animal Farm*, *Bapalapa2*, student reviewer
- “Why You Should Read *Animal Farm*,” Kainzow, blogger

Video

- Video versions of poems and speeches
- Mini BIO—Joseph Stalin

Advertisements

Propaganda Posters

OUR CLASS WILL VIEW PHOTOGRAPHS OF ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE:

- The Temple at Abu Simbel
- Great Sphinx at Giza

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

1. How and why does language inspire?
2. How and why does language persuade?
3. How and why is language dangerous?
4. How and why does language influence thought and action?

QUESTION TO ASK AT HOME:

As your Grade 7 student reads, ask:

- What is the essential meaning, or most important message, in *Animal Farm*?

WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY GRADE 7 STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 4?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: Identity in the Middle Ages

Module 2: Americans All

Module 3: Language and Power

Module 4: Fever

In the fourth module, *Fever*, students explore a powerful moment in American history, the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia in 1793, and use this crisis to explore human responses and to ask and investigate research questions. Throughout, students ask: *How can times of crisis affect citizens and society?*

OUR CLASS WILL READ AND VIEW THESE TEXTS:

Novel (Literary)

- *Fever 1793*, Laurie Halse Anderson

Historical Account

- *An American Plague*, Jim Murphy

Painting

- *The Artist in His Museum*, Charles Willson Peale

Websites

- “Yellow Fever,” U.S. National Library of Medicine
- “Q&A,” Jim Murphy

Video

- *Philadelphia: The Great Experiment*, History Making Productions

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- In what context did the yellow fever epidemic of 1793 emerge?
- What were the effects of the unfolding crisis on Philadelphia and its citizens?
- What did the crisis reveal about Philadelphia's citizens and society?
- How did people respond to the crisis?
- What is the story of the year?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME:

As your Grade 7 student reads, ask:

- What have you learned about the crisis and the response to it?
- How does what you are reading build your knowledge of how people and societies handle crisis?
- What do the books you are reading show about historical research?

BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *Invisible Microbe: Tuberculosis and the Never-Ending Search for a Cure*, Jim Murphy
- *Oh, Rats! The Story of Rats and People*, Albert Marrin
- *Terrible Typhoid Mary: A True Story of the Deadliest Cook in America*, Susan Campbell Bartoletti
- *When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox, and AIDS*, James Cross Giblin
- *The Great Trouble: A Mystery of London, The Blue Death, and a Boy Called Eel*, Deborah Hopkinson

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSING HISTORY AND CRISES:

The core texts in this module help students see different human responses to a crisis and the importance of historical knowledge and research to accurately depict history. Discuss historical events and people and past and modern-day crises, as well as the responses to those crises. Ask questions such as:

1. For history: The study of history helps us to understand not only our past but our present. Read history books together, and share stories about your personal history. Help students see how the past informs the present—and how we can learn from the past.
2. For crises: Read other related books or the news together and discuss the contexts, causes, events, and effects of crises. Help your student see that individual actions can make a difference and that people can respond compassionately and courageously in response to natural or human-made disasters.
3. For all content: Encourage your child to ask questions, and when he or she does, work together to investigate and research the answers to those questions.