

The purpose of this tool is to help educators understand each of the grade level standards and how those standards connect to the students' overall preparation for college and career readiness.

Standards are defined as the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge. This document is color-coded to reflect both anchor and priority standards. Though previous emphasis was placed on priority standards to address lost learning due to COVID-19, New Mexico teachers should note that moving forward, while priority standards allow for acceleration of learning, all standards should be addressed in instruction throughout the school year.

In this guide you will find:

- A [breakdown](#) of each of the grade level standards within the literature strand, including:
 - Vertical alignment guidance
 - Essential vocabulary related to the standard
 - Identification of anchor standards as identified by the CCSS and priority standards as identified by NMPED
- Sample aligned [assessment items](#)
- Companion resources guides that address:
 - [Planning Literacy Instruction with MLSS Guide](#)
 - [Choosing a Complex Text](#)
 - [Text Dependent Questions with Complex Texts](#)
 - [Vocabulary Instruction with Complex Texts](#)
 - [Speaking, Listening, and Writing](#)
 - [Differentiating Support for All Learners](#)
 - [Cross-Curricular Connections with Literacy](#)
 - [Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness in Literacy](#)

Key		
	<i>Anchor Standard</i>	Anchor standards, as identified by the Common Core, are denoted with an anchor icon. Anchor standards are the fundamental skills we want students to have when they graduate. The College and Career Ready (CCR) and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. Anchor standards appear from Kindergarten to 12th grade and are aligned to what colleges and workplaces expect students to be able to do.
	<i>Priority Standard</i>	Priority standards, as identified by NMPED, are denoted with red highlighting. Priority standards are the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge a student needs. This does not mean that these are only standards required to be taught, just these are the standards that will allow for the acceleration the students of New Mexico need during this time.

STANDARDS BREAKDOWN

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key Ideas and Details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCSS.RI.7.1 ○ CCSS.RI.7.2 ○ CCSS.RI.7.3 ● Craft and Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCSS.RI.7.4 ○ CCSS.RI.7.5 ○ CCSS.RI.7.6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integration of Knowledge and Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCSS.RI.7.7 ○ CCSS.RI.7.8 ○ CCSS.RI.7.9 ○ NMSS.7.1 ○ NMSS.7.2 ● Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCSS.RI.7.10
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RI.7.1		
	Anchor Standard: Key Ideas and Details <i>R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</i>	
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Key Ideas and Details
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.1, RI.2.1, RI.3.1, RI.4.1, RI.5.1, RI.6.1	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.1, RI.9-10.1, RI.11-12.1
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students use multiple (3-5) pieces of evidence from the text to support their analyses of what the text directly and indirectly states.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysis – a detailed examination of the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole explicit, explicitly – stated clearly and directly, leaving no room for confusion or interpretation inference – a conclusion derived from logical reasoning following an investigation of available evidence text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more textual evidence – evidence found within a particular text used to support or explain conclusions, opinions, and/or assertions about the text itself 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify evidence (phrases, words or statements) that most strongly supports the central idea of a text. determine what textual evidence supports the character trait of a main character. determine how characters respond to events in a story. cite textual evidence via paraphrasing or direct quotes, including page/paragraph numbers, to support an idea in a text. 		

RI.7.2				
	Anchor Standard: Key Ideas and Details <i>R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</i>			
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand		
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Key Ideas and Details		
Standard		Vertical Alignment		
Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.2, RI.2.2, RI.3.2, RI.4.2, RI.5.2, RI.6.2</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.2, RI.9-10.2, RI.11-12.2</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.2, RI.2.2, RI.3.2, RI.4.2, RI.5.2, RI.6.2	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.2, RI.9-10.2, RI.11-12.2
<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.2, RI.2.2, RI.3.2, RI.4.2, RI.5.2, RI.6.2	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.2, RI.9-10.2, RI.11-12.2			
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development		
Students establish the theme of a literary text and examine its progression throughout the text. Using the theme and key details, students summarize the text, being sure to omit any personal opinions or bias.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● central idea – the unifying concept within an informational text to which other elements and ideas relate ● objective summary – a brief account of a text’s central or main points, themes, or ideas that is free of bias, prejudice, and personal opinion and does not incorporate outside information ● summary/summarize – a brief statement of the main points of a larger work or text; the act of providing such a statement or account ● text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more ● theme – the subject or underlying meaning that a literary text directly or indirectly explains, develops, and/or explores 		
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● determine more than one central idea of a text. ● identify the topic sentence for a summary of a text. 				

- analyze the theme of a text and describe how a character's actions help to develop it.

RI.7.3				
	<p>Anchor Standard: Key Ideas and Details</p> <p><i>R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</i></p>			
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand		
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Key Ideas and Details		
Standard		Vertical Alignment		
Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.3, RI.2.3, RI.3.3, RI.4.3, RI.5.3, RI.6.3</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.3, RI.9-10.3, RI.11-12.3</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.3, RI.2.3, RI.3.3, RI.4.3, RI.5.3, RI.6.3	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.3, RI.9-10.3, RI.11-12.3
<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.3, RI.2.3, RI.3.3, RI.4.3, RI.5.3, RI.6.3	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.3, RI.9-10.3, RI.11-12.3			
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development		
Students analyze the relationship between specific people, events, and concepts in a text to explain how they interact with and affect each other. For example, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● event – a thing that happens; an occurrence ● text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more 		
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● determine how information in a text will be used. ● analyze how an author connects ideas. ● explain how an author presents contrasting information in a text. 				

RI.7.4				
	Anchor Standard: Craft and Structure <i>R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</i>			
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand		
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Craft and Structure		
Standard		Vertical Alignment		
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.4, RI.2.4, RI.3.4, RI.4.4, RI.5.4, RI.6.4</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.4, RI.9-10.4, RI.11-12.4</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.4, RI.2.4, RI.3.4, RI.4.4, RI.5.4, RI.6.4	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.4, RI.9-10.4, RI.11-12.4
<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.4, RI.2.4, RI.3.4, RI.4.4, RI.5.4, RI.6.4	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.4, RI.9-10.4, RI.11-12.4			
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development		
Students examine the text to understand the meaning of words or phrases using the context to inform their thinking. Students analyze how a word chosen by the author affects the meaning and tone of text.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole phrase(s) – a small group of words representing a conceptual unit, containing either a subject or a verb, but not both. Both a subject and a verb would constitute a clause (e.g., “Running through the forest, she breathed in the fresh, crisp air.”) text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more tone – the attitude an author takes toward the subject or topic of a text, generally revealed through word choice, perspective, or point of view 		
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine the meaning of words from context. highlight or underline the parts of the text that offer information about the word and write a possible definition for their word. identify alternative words that may have similar meaning. 				

RI.7.5				
	Anchor Standard: Craft and Structure <i>R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.</i>			
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand		
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Craft and Structure		
Standard		Vertical Alignment		
Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.5, RI.2.5, RI.3.5, RI.4.5, RI.5.5, RI.6.5</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.5, RI.9-10.5, RI.11-12.5</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.5, RI.2.5, RI.3.5, RI.4.5, RI.5.5, RI.6.5	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.5, RI.9-10.5, RI.11-12.5
<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.5, RI.2.5, RI.3.5, RI.4.5, RI.5.5, RI.6.5	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.5, RI.9-10.5, RI.11-12.5			
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development		
Students examine the organizational structure of a text, including how chapters or subsections add to the overall text and to the progression of its ideas.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more 		
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand how sections contribute to the development of ideas in a text. identify clues in topic sentences that tell us about the text’s structure. create a diagram of the text’s structure and annotate the diagram, explaining how each major section contributes to the text as a whole and to the development of ideas. 				

RI.7.6		
	<p>Anchor Standard: Craft and Structure</p> <p><i>R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</i></p>	
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Craft and Structure
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.	<p><i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.6, RI.2.6, RI.3.6, RI.4.6, RI.5.6, RI.6.6</p>	<p><i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.6, RI.9-10.6, RI.11-12.6</p>
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students establish the author's beliefs about a subject or their reason for writing a text (to inform, persuade, entertain, describe) and explain how the author makes their point of view unique or noteworthy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● point of view – a narrator's, writer's, or speaker's position with regard to the events of a narrative; one's stance on events or information given their orientation (physically and/or mentally) to the events or information; the vantage point ● purpose – the reason for a particular action or creation (e.g., literary work or speech); the reason for which something exists (e.g., to persuade, to inform, to express, and/or to entertain) ● text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● compare two authors' points of view or purposes and analyze how the authors shape and present their information. ● reference words, phrases, sentences, and passages that reveal the author's point of view or purpose. ● explain how the author used a text to distinguish his or her position from that of others 		

RI.7.7		
	<p>Anchor Standard: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</p> <p><i>R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</i></p>	
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).	<p><i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.7, RI.2.7, RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RI.5.7, RI.6.7</p>	<p><i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.7, RI.9-10.7, RI.11-12.7</p>
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students explain how a written version of a text is similar to and different from an audio, video, or multimedia version of the same text. They analyze how each of these different versions depicts the subject. For example, how the delivery in an audio recording of a speech affects the impact of the written words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● compare – in a general sense, this is to measure or note the similarities and differences between or among objects, people, etc.; however, when used together with contrast, this refers to the highlighting of the ways in which two or more objects, people, etc. are alike or similar 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● create summary statements explaining how two versions of a text are similar and different. ● highlight words that have an emotional impact on the listener or viewer of an audio/video recording that is different from the impact when the words are read silently. ● analyze how the produced adaptation of the original is similar to or different from the original. 		

RI.7.8				
	<p>Anchor Standard: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas <i>R.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.</i></p>			
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand		
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas		
Standard		Vertical Alignment		
Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.8, RI.2.8, RI.3.8, RI.4.8, RI.5.8, RI.6.8</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.8, RI.9-10.8, RI.11-12.8</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.8, RI.2.8, RI.3.8, RI.4.8, RI.5.8, RI.6.8	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.8, RI.9-10.8, RI.11-12.8
<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.8, RI.2.8, RI.3.8, RI.4.8, RI.5.8, RI.6.8	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.8, RI.9-10.8, RI.11-12.8			
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development		
Students follow and assess the argument and specific claims made in a text by judging if the reasons provided are relevant and if the evidence used is applicable and sufficient enough for supporting the claims.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● argument – value statement(s) supported by evidence whose purpose is to persuade or explain ● claim(s) – an assertion(s) of the truth of something, often a value statement; generally, an author uses evidence to support the assertion of truth ● evaluate – to determine quality or value after careful analysis or investigation ● evidence – facts and/or information (quotes, statistics, graphs, etc.) presented together as a body of support for a claim or value statement ● reasons/reasoning – an explanation or justification for a claim, action, or value statement; the process of thinking through an argument, forming judgments, and drawing conclusions using a process of logic ● relevant – closely connected or appropriate to what is being done or considered ● sound – based on reason, sense or judgment ● sufficient – enough or adequate ● text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more 		

Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...

- identify sufficient evidence that supports a claim.
- determine if the author has used enough relevant evidence to support their claims.
- list the criteria for evaluating whether reasoning is sound and evidence is relevant and sufficient.
- create a rubric that they use when reading arguments and claims.
- differentiate between valid and invalid claims using sound reasoning and evidence.

RI.7.9				
	<p>Anchor Standard: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</p> <p><i>R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.</i></p>			
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand		
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas		
Standard		Vertical Alignment		
Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.9, RI.2.9, RI.3.9, RI.4.9, RI.5.9, RI.6.9</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.9, RI.9-10.9, RI.11-12.9</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.9, RI.2.9, RI.3.9, RI.4.9, RI.5.9, RI.6.9	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.9, RI.9-10.9, RI.11-12.9
<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.9, RI.2.9, RI.3.9, RI.4.9, RI.5.9, RI.6.9	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.9, RI.9-10.9, RI.11-12.9			
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development		
Students compare how multiple authors writing on the same topic strategically structure their key information by placing a strong emphasis on certain evidence or promoting certain interpretations of facts.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze – to critically examine the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole ● evidence – facts and/or information (quotes, statistics, graphs, etc.) presented together as a body of support for a claim or value statement ● interpretations – explanations or representations of what is obscure or unknown based upon the viewer’s/reader’s understanding of the information and/or topic; multiple interpretations are often possible based on information provided and the format/medium of presentation ● topic – the subject or matter being discussed or written about in a text, speech, etc. 		
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● determine how authors present information on the same topic but emphasize different ideas. ● compare two authors’ points of view or purposes and analyze how the authors shape and present their information. ● write conclusion statements about how an event or person is presented in a positive or negative way by different authors. ● assess the author's bias in each text to understand the author's perspective on the subject. 				

7.1

7.1		
Grade	NMSS Domain	
7	Reading: Informational Text (RI)	
Standard	Vertical Alignment	
Students in Grade 7 will distinguish between primary and secondary sources.	<i>Previous Grades:</i> 6.1	<i>Future Grades:</i> 8.1
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students can distinguish between primary and secondary sources and understand the defining characteristics of each and how they should be used in understanding a topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● primary source – immediate, first-hand account of a topic, from people who had a direct connection with it ● secondary source – a text that comments on, interprets, or discusses primary sources; documents written after an event has occurred by someone who was not present 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● identify the key characteristics of a primary source and secondary source. ● compare a primary source and secondary source on the same topic and analyze the difference in tone, structure and point of view. ● choose a current topic and identify a primary and secondary source for that topic, describing the criteria they used to distinguish each. 		

7.2

Grade		NMSS Domain	
7	Reading: Informational Text (RI)		
Standard		Vertical Alignment	
Students in Grade 7 will describe how the media use propaganda, bias, and stereotyping to influence audiences.		<i>Previous Grades:</i> 6.2	<i>Future Grades:</i> 8.2
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students can explain how the media use specific techniques of propaganda, bias and stereotyping to influence an audience’s perception of a topic.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● bias – prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair ● media – various means of communication such as newspaper, television, and the Internet ● propaganda – information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view ● stereotyping – using a set idea about what a particular type of person is like, especially an idea that is wrong 	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● differentiate between propaganda, bias and stereotyping and identify and analyze examples of each. ● compare two media coverages of the same topic and identify the use or lack thereof of propaganda, bias and stereotyping in each. ● analyze how specific word choice, graphics, pictures, headlines, etc. are used to influence an audience in a given text. 			

RI.7.10



Anchor Standard: Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity

R.10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand	
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity	
Standard		Vertical Alignment	
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.		<i>Previous Grades:</i> RI.1.10, RI.2.10, RI.3.10, RI.4.10, RI.5.10, RI.6.10	<i>Future Grades:</i> RI.8.10, RI.9-10.10, RI.11-12.10
Clarification Statement		Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
By the end of grade 7, students competently read and understand informational texts within the 6-8 text complexity band (Lexile: 925-1185). They are able to read independently for an extended time. Students make connections to their background knowledge and relevant experiences to engage with text.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● independently – on one’s own, without aid from another (such as a teacher) ● informational text – a nonfiction text whose purpose is to provide information about or explain a topic (e.g., infographic, advertisement, documentary film, etc.) ● proficient/proficiently – competent, skilled, and/or showing knowledge and aptitude in doing something; the level at which one is able to complete a particular skill, such as reading complex texts, with success ● text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more ● text complexity band – stratification of the levels of intricacy and/or difficulty of texts, corresponding to associated grade levels (2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-10, 11-12) determined by three factors: 1) qualitative dimensions (levels of meaning, language complexity as determined by the attentive reader), 2) quantitative dimensions (word length and frequency, sentence length, and cohesion), and 3) reader 	

	and task considerations (factors related to a specific reader such as motivation, background knowledge, persistence; others associated with the task itself such as the purpose or demands of the task itself)
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Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...

- use a strategy or keep a purpose in mind to monitor their comprehension.
- choose an annotation tool and mark passages for new learning and confusions.
- note new ideas learned and questions raised about the topic after reading a text.
- monitor their comprehension by stopping as they are reading and asking themselves questions throughout the text.

ASSESSMENT GUIDE

- **Constructed Response Assessment Task aligned to RI.7.1 and RI.7.2**
- **Constructed Response Assessment Task aligned to RI.7.4**
 - Evidence of Text Complexity and Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness
 - VABB Analysis with Example Questions and Exemplar Student Responses
 - Example MLSS Universal Supports
- **Multiple Choice Assessment Items**

Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
6	Reading: Informational (RI)	Key Ideas and Details
Sample Task #1 (Constructed Response)		
<p>After reading “Santorio Santorio and the Thermometer” by Robert Mulcahy, students must respond to the prompt: What was Santorio Santorio like as a person? Make a claim about what kind of person he was and defend your claim using evidence from the text.</p>		
Exemplar Student Responses		
RI.7.1 RI.7.2	<p>A strong student response where the student does the thinking and references text evidence will include most of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Santorio’s inventions were focused on improving diagnoses for patients so that doctors could treat accordingly. The thermometer is a good example: “Santorio knew the thermometer would enable doctors to determine a person’s temperature exactly, making both diagnosis and treatment more precise.” ● Santorio also invented the pulsilogium to improve the accuracy of measuring a patient’s pulse. For both the thermometer and the pulsilogium, Santorio kept working to improve, showing determination and commitment to reach his goal of improving lives. ● Santorio invented a bathing bag for those unable to get out of bed, further showing he was committed to making those suffering more comfortable. ● Santorio also introduced a way of removing bladder stones. ● He taught at the university, wanting to share his knowledge with others. ● He willed all of his money to schools, charities, and scientific endeavors. 	
	DOK	Blooms
	Level 3	Analyzing
	Possible Aligned Language Objectives	Possible Misconceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text that will help form the basis of their claim (i.e. “Someone who does X is an X type of person”). ● Students will analyze the interaction between the individual (Santorio) and the effect of his actions on others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students may focus on their opinions of Santorio Santorio’s acts rather than focus on textual evidence to support their claim. ● Students may cite weak evidence to support their claim instead of stronger pieces of evidence. 	

Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
7	Reading: Informational (RI)	Craft and Structure
Sample Task #2 (Constructed Response)		
<p>After reading “The Boston Massacre” from revolutionaryspaces.org students must answer: What is the meaning of the word “disperse” as it is used in paragraph 2? What context clues help you determine the word’s meaning?</p>		
Exemplar Student Responses		
RI.7.4	<p>A strong response would include some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Disperse” in paragraph 2 of Passage 1 means “drive off.” The soldiers wanted to drive off the crowds. The context clue “gathered townspeople” tells us that the people are together in a group as does the phrase “more colonists gathered”. The sentence tells us that the sentry couldn’t “disperse” the group but could “defend themselves” which is what they might have to do if the group stayed together. 	
	DOK	Blooms
	Level 1	Understanding
	Possible Aligned Language Objectives	Possible Misconceptions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will determine the meaning of a word as it is used in a text. • Students will provide textual evidence to support their determination of a word’s meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may think that “disperse” means “attack” as it is posited as an alternative to “defending themselves”.

Evidence of Text Complexity and Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness	
RI.7.4	<p>Text Summary and evidence of Complexity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an informational text that describes the historical events that occurred leading to the Boston Massacre of March 5th, 1770. • 1010L - 1020L
	<p>Evidence of Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is represented in the text used to assess this cluster of standards? British soldiers and members of a "patriot" mob. Some important historical figures are mentioned, such as John Adams. • How are those groups and individuals portrayed? There are two groups mentioned and portrayed in the text: the British and the citizens of Boston (portrayed as also the rioters, or "patriot mob"). They are portrayed as enemies or rivals. • Does the text provoke critical questions about cultural and linguistic diversity, especially within marginalized communities? Some questions might arise around freedom of marginalized groups (in this case American colonists were marginalized by the British). The text seems very straightforward about one particular event in history: the Boston Massacre. • What supports are provided to teachers to identify blind spots? The text is part of a website and it provides an additional visual support, "The Bloody Massacre" engraving by Paul Revere. It says it is not an accurate depiction of the event but it provides a visual for context. • How is this text culturally/linguistically responsive? It might be considered culturally responsive as the American colonists were marginalized and were fighting for their freedom against their oppressors (the British).

VABB Analysis		
RI.7.4	Validate <i>The intentional and purposeful legitimization of the home culture and language of the student.</i>	Affirm <i>The intentional and purposeful effort to reverse the negative stereotypes, images, and representations of marginalized cultures and languages promoted by corporate mainstream.</i>
	<p>Question: The text uses the adjectives "rebellious" and "rowdy" to describe the town and the people in Boston who were against the British. What are some positive and negative ideas/connotations you may have around these two words?</p> <p>ESR: Rebellious and rowdy may seem negative in general because they imply that the person may be disorderly, against authority, and showing disobedience and resistance. However, students may also find that rebellious and rowdy can be characteristics of a person who may be fighting for their ideals and for change.</p>	<p>Question: How did the tension and violence escalate in the city of Boston?</p> <p>ESR: The tension and violence was building in the city. One example is what happened with Private White at night on King Street. He felt threatened and hit a young apprentice with his musket. Soon he was surrounded, and a fight broke out. Then at the same time bells started to ring throughout town and people poured into the streets. We can see this is an example of one event escalating into violence and quickly getting out of control.</p>
	Build <i>Create the connections between the home culture/language and the school culture/language through instruction for success in school and the broader social context.</i>	Bridge <i>Create opportunities for situational appropriateness that provides the academic and social skills that students will need to have success beyond school culture.</i>
	<p>Question: Violence and rioting on February 22nd, 1770 ended with 11 year old Christopher Seider shot. Explain the injustice in this event.</p> <p>ESR: Christopher Seider was just an innocent child who was part of a crowd in the street when Richardson fired his gun. Even though he did not want to kill Seider, this was the result of uncontrolled violence and a consequence of living in an environment where inhabitants felt they had to constantly fight to be heard and respected.</p>	<p>Question: What are other conflicts that you know of in your community, country, or world that are similar to the events described?</p> <p>ESR: Students' responses may vary but they may make connections to other readings, current events, or personal stories relating to the conflict. Especially if students are building from the previous question, they could be prompted to think about other instances in which children suffer injustices.</p>

Layer 1: Universal Supports

High-quality core instruction for all students

In New Mexico we believe that all students deserve access to high-quality grade-level texts to show proficiency with reading and comprehension as outlined in the New Mexico standards. These universal supports provide core instruction that allow students to comprehend complex texts by providing access points and opportunities for deep thinking.

1. Pre-teach Tier 2 Vocabulary Words
 - Tier 2 Vocabulary are words that are more likely to appear in text than speech. Pre-teaching these words before diving into a text allows students to better understand the text because their cognitive load can be focused more on comprehension. To learn more, please visit Resource Guide on [Vocabulary Instruction with Complex Texts](#)
 - Choose words that are not implicitly or explicitly defined within the text.
2. Annotate/Create Text-Dependent questions to push student thinking to think about themes and central ideas, knowledge of vocabulary, or syntax and structure following the steps outlined in this resource guide. To learn more, please visit Resource Guide on [Text Dependent Questions with Complex Texts](#)
 - Crafting and using text dependent questions throughout a complex text allows the reader to chunk the text to better focus on meaning. They also teach the reader how to think deeply about a text and use evidence from the text to support that thinking.

Universal Supports

The details listed below apply to the specific text in the bottom-most box and are meant to offer examples of how universal supports can be planned for lessons using an appropriately complex text.

Tier 2 Vocabulary to Preteach

Word: disperse

Think Aloud: To disperse is a verb or an action that means to cause something to break up into smaller pieces. Similarly it can mean to cause a big crowd of people or a concentration of objects to spread out so that they are not all together in the same space. In this sense if people disperse, then they may be less crowded or they may have more space.

Text Dependent Question

Question: What are some examples of how the violence escalated in Boston on March 5th, 1770?

ESR: First Private Hugh White struck one of the young boys with his musket, soon after that the private was surrounded and was being thrown snowballs and chunks of ice. First it did not seem like there should have been violence but very quickly violence started to become out of control.

Tier 2 Vocabulary:

“At about the same time, bells began to ring throughout the town. Bells at night meant fire, a disaster for the wooden-built town. Men and boys poured into the streets as shouts of “Fire” were heard. As more colonists gathered on King Street, taunting the sentry and daring him to fight, White began to fear for his life and called for the main guard in the barracks beside the Town House (Old State House). Although the troops could not forcefully disperse the gathered townspeople without civilian authority, they could defend themselves. Captain Thomas Preston marched out a party of seven Grenadiers, the biggest men in the Regiment.”

From “The Boston Massacre of March 5, 1770: The Event and Aftermath” by Revolutionary Spaces

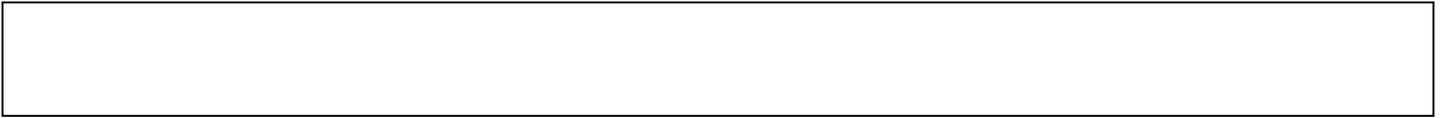
[Link to Full Text](#)

Text Dependent Question:

“Boston in 1770 had no street lamps. Monday, March 5th, was a cold and moonlit night. Snow covered the ground. Private Hugh White was the lone sentry on guard at the Custom House on King Street. What began as taunting between White and several young apprentices soon escalated to violence. After striking one of the young boys on the head with his musket, White found himself surrounded, pelted with curses, snowballs and chunks of ice.”

From “The Boston Massacre of March 5, 1770: The Event and Aftermath” by Revolutionary Spaces

[Link to Full Text](#)



Multiple Choice Assessment Items		
Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
7	Reading: Informational Text (RI)	Key Ideas and Details
RI.7.3	<p>One researcher observed wild rice plants that looked starved. According to “Wild Rice Under the Microscope,” what hypothesis did the researcher form?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Plant roots use up nitrogen. B. Sulfates damage plant roots. C. The plants lack sufficient iron. D. Sulfates are more harmful than sulfides. <p>Text Reference: “Wild Rice Under the Microscope” by John Myers from Cognia</p> <p>How will the research described in “Wild Rice under the Microscope” be used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. To inform Minnesota lawmakers B. To confirm historical sulfate levels in lake water C. To settle disputes between the Ojibwe and the miners D. To force mining companies to pay for cleaning up nearby water <p>Text Reference: “Wild Rice Under the Microscope” by John Myers from Cognia</p>	

Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
7	Reading: Informational Text (RI)	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
RI.7.5	<p>Reread paragraph 4 from “The Tell-Tale Bacteria.”</p> <p>Which of the following best describes how paragraph 4 develops a central idea in the article.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. By explaining the ways in which fingerprints are unique to each person B. By explaining a university study examining similar hand microbes between friends C. By detailing how scientists identify unique hand microbes and fingerprints D. By expanding on the similarities between hand microbes and fingerprints <p>Text Reference: “The Tell-Tale Bacteria” by Stephen Ornes from Cognia</p> <p>Which detail from paragraph 2 of “Cell Phone Tattlers” has the most significant impact on the meaning of the article?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Scientists analyze DNA. B. DNA is similar to fingerprints. C. DNA is unique to each person. D. Detectives collect DNA samples. <p>Text Reference: “Cell Phone Tattlers” by Emily Sohn from Cognia</p>	
RI.7.6	<p>Which sentence from the article best shows the author’s point of view?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. “Blame your brain, at least in part.” (paragraph 1) B. “And that’s a serious public health problem.” (paragraph 9) C. “Crankiness can result, especially if you don’t feel well.” (paragraph 14) D. “And you can’t easily change your body’s natural circadian rhythm.” (paragraph 21) <p>Text Reference: “Need Those ZZZZZs: Young Night Owls Still Require Plenty of Sleep” by Kathiann M. Kowalski from New York State Testing Program Grade 7 ELA Test Released Questions 2021</p> <p>The author of the article balances different points of view on the issue of banning plastic bags by including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. information about plastic-bag bans in Europe and Asia. B. arguments from environmentalists and businesses on plastic-bag bans. C. data from scientists concerned with plastic bags in the environment. D. quotes from people living in American cities where plastic bags are banned. <p>Text Reference: “Telling Plastic to ‘Bag it’” by Patricia Smith from New York State Testing Program Grade 7 ELA Test Released Questions 2015</p>	

Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
7	Reading: Informational Text (RI)	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
RI.7.7	<p>Which detail from “How Tides Work” does the first diagram best illustrate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. “The earth attracts the moon, and the moon attracts the earth.” B. “The earth attracts the water most powerfully at two points, that nearest to it and that furthest away from it.” C. “The moon travels round the earth once in twenty-eight days, but because the rotation of the earth and the revolution of the moon differ, there are always slight differences in tide schedules, which occur at times a little more than every twelve hours.” D. “The sun, as well as the moon, attracts the ocean, but with less power, since it is so much further away.” <p>Text Reference: “How Tides Work” by Archibald Williams from Cognia</p> <p>In “How Tides Work,” how does the second diagram help the reader understand the author’s ideas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. It demonstrates how long it takes the moon to travel around the earth. B. It shows what portion of the earth’s surface is covered with water. C. It illustrates the difference between tides and ocean currents. D. It gives a visual image of how spring tides and neap tides work. <p>Text Reference: “How Tides Work” by Archibald Williams from Cognia</p>	
RI.7.9	<p>Both Lewis Latimer and John Deere were determined to succeed. How were their paths to success similar? How were their paths to success different? Use details from both articles to support your response.</p> <p>In your response, be sure to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain how their paths to success were similar ● Explain how their paths to success were different ● Use details from both articles to support your response <p>Text References: “A Sticky Problem for Farmers” by Nathan Aaseng and “Lewis Latimer” by Stephen Currie from New York State Testing Program Grade 7 ELA Test Released Questions 2015</p> <p>In “Excerpt from <i>Buddha Boy</i>” and “Excerpt from <i>One + One = Blue</i>,” both Justin and Basil take chances that they learn from. What chances do they each take? What do they learn about themselves through the conversations and events in each story? Use details from both stories to support your response.</p> <p>In your response, be sure to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain what chances Justin and Basil each take ● Explain what they learn about themselves through the conversations and events in each story 	

- Use details from **both** stories to support your response

Text References: [“Excerpt from *Buddha Boy*” by Kathe Koja](#) and [“Excerpt from *One + One = Blue*” by MJ Auch](#)
from New York State Testing Program Grade 7 ELA Test Released Questions 2016

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.3

Wild Rice under the Microscope

by John Myers

- 1 University of Minnesota researchers have been working with hula hoops, canning jars, and plastic tubs for the past two years in a painstaking effort to measure the impact of sulfate pollution on wild rice.
- 2 Their research could help determine why Minnesota's famed wild-rice stands seem to be declining. And the results could help plot the future of the state's taconite iron-ore mining industry and the beginning of copper and nickel mining in Minnesota. By some estimates, the state may hold the largest untapped deposits of copper, nickel, and related metals in the world.
- 3 The study is under way to better understand the relationship between sulfate and wild rice. Sulfate is an ion containing sulfur and oxygen. Sulfate comes from natural processes, such as decaying plants and animals, and from industrial processes of tanneries, steel mills, pulp mills, textile plants, and wastewater treatment plants. Sulfate can even fall from the sky in the form of acid rain. In northeastern Minnesota, data from some state-permitted iron mining and ore processing facilities, which are subject to monitoring, indicate elevated levels of sulfate that may be affecting wild-rice growth downstream.
- 4 Research in the 1940s by John Moyle, a scientist for the Minnesota Department of Conservation (now called the Department of Natural Resources), showed wild rice was seldom found in waters with high sulfate.
- 5 "Moyle did a great job documenting the correlation between sulfate and wild rice in the 1940s," says John Pastor, scientist at the University of Minnesota Duluth. "But he didn't take it as far as proving sulfate caused wild rice to decline. We're trying to find out if sulfate really is the limiting factor and, if so, what it's actually doing to the rice."
- 6 **Looking at Roots.** Pastor and his crews are using canning jars with special airtight lids to grow wild rice in liquid solution, or hydroponically, to test the reaction to sulfate and other variables. Inside Pastor's lab, wild rice plants grow in chambers under lamps that mimic the long days of a northern Minnesota summer.
- 7 At the university's outdoor field station, Pastor is using plastic tubs, simulating 30 little lakes exposed to all the elements of north woods weather. For the past eight years, in a project supported by the National Science Foundation and the Fond du Lac Band of Ojibwe, Pastor had been using the tubs to study which nutrients are key to growth of wild rice. Now he's using the tubs to see how sulfate affects rice.
- 8 Meanwhile, Amy Myrbo, a limnogeologist at the university's Twin Cities campus, has used hula hoops to measure rice density. For the past two summers, crews in canoes have used these handy, uniform circles at more than 130 sites in lakes and rivers across the state. The crews took samples of water sucked from sediment around roots, sediment-core samples, and measurements of nutrients and water chemistry. If they found no rice where historical reports hint there should have been rice, they looked for plants such as lily pads that grow in similar conditions and took readings there.

- 9 During fieldwork in 2011 and 2012, the researchers collected data that seemed to buttress John Moyle's findings: Wild rice was not abundant in water with more than 10 parts per million sulfate.
- 10 "In waters with high sulfate, we've struggled to find any wild rice," Myrbo says of the latest research, all of which is being overseen by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.
- 11 So far researchers have sampled a limited number of waters with sulfate levels higher than 10 parts per million, but the PCA plans to examine more of them in 2013.
- 12 Pastor and other scientists say the damage to wild rice probably occurs when sulfate is converted to hydrogen sulfide. In an oxygen-starved environment such as the sediment under wild-rice beds, bacteria "breathe in" sulfate and "exhale" hydrogen sulfide, which can be toxic to plants, says Ed Swain, the PCA research scientist who is coordinating the wild-rice research project.
- 13 Pastor knows from previous research that the availability of adequate nitrogen is the biggest limiting factor for the growth of wild rice. Now he is seeing wild-rice plants exposed to high sulfate that "didn't look poisoned. They looked starved." Pastor's hypothesis is that sulfate transformed to sulfides is affecting root growth and blocking nutrients from getting into plants. Now he will see if the research supports his hypothesis.
- 14 Scientists also will look at the role of iron in the sulfate-to-sulfide conversion and how sulfate can reduce the iron, copper, and zinc available to plants.
- 15 "You don't just throw in sulfate and the plant dies," Pastor says. "It's a whole ecosystem reaction that happens over years."
- 16 **Changing Rules.** Minnesota has had a rule on the books since 1973 limiting the amount of sulfate in waters used for the production of wild rice. That's when the state adopted Moyle's observation as it set a sulfate standard to protect wild rice, one of many water quality protection measures under the then new federal Clean Water Act. The rule went mostly unknown and unenforced until, in recent years, environmental and tribal groups pressed the PCA to enforce the sulfate limit in mining permits to protect what appear to be dwindling stands of wild rice downstream from mining operations.
- 17 Mining industry officials, many northern lawmakers, and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce are battling back, saying the sulfate limit could put taconite plants out of business and could prevent copper-nickel mining from becoming a huge industry here. The chamber filed a lawsuit in 2010 challenging the 1973 standard as arbitrary, unfounded, and too restrictive for the mining industry. The chamber lost at both the district court and the appeals court levels.
- 18 State lawmakers in 2011 moved to change the wild-rice standard, with bills passing committees to raise the standard to 50 and even 250 parts per million. Ultimately, the effort stopped short of becoming law after the federal Environmental Protection Agency signaled it would reject any legislatively imposed standard without science to back up the move.
- 19 And that's where the wild-rice sulfate study comes in.
- 20 Many copper-nickel mining projects are on the drawing board in Minnesota, with the potential to create thousands of jobs and generate millions of dollars. With this in mind, Minnesota lawmakers in 2011 gave the PCA \$1.5 million and just two years to find the answers. The PCA, using data from the study, will decide what the sulfate limit should be, which lakes and rivers will be considered "waters used for the production of wild rice," and whether the limit applies only in the growing season or year-round.

- 21 What is known is that sulfate levels have gone way up in some areas. Historic, or background, sulfate levels in northeastern Minnesota waters were generally low, well below 10 parts per million. Now, downstream of the Iron Range after a century of mining activity, levels on some waters can approach 100 parts per million or higher.
- 22 **Other Factors.** No one suggests that sulfate is the only thing harming wild rice. A warming climate, more floods and droughts, shoreline development, and a host of water quality issues probably are contributing to the problem of dwindling wild-rice stands. The decline of wild rice is likely affecting how waterfowl use Minnesota lakes, because wild rice is a key food during fall migration. The decline also may be one reason fewer people are harvesting this tasty natural food. DNR records show license sales for harvesting wild rice peaked at about 16,000 in 1968 and have plummeted to just 1,500 annually.
- 23 Many Ojibwe people regard wild rice—*manoomin*—as a sacred gift from the Creator. Ojibwe harvesters say they too have seen the decline in the stands across the region where their ancestors settled precisely because wild rice was so abundant.
- 24 “We’ve been on a downward spiral for a long, long time with wild rice,” says Robert Shimek, a Red Lake Ojibwe, wild-rice harvester, and member of the PCA sulfate study advisory committee. “We’re seeing less and less wild rice for each generation.”

“Wild Rice under the Microscope” by John Myers, from Minnesota Conservation Volunteer. Copyright © 2013 by State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources. Published by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.5

The Tell-Tale Bacteria

by Stephen Ornes

- 1 Look closely at your hands—are they clean? It doesn't matter how many times you wash your hands, they're still crawling with tiny organisms called microbes. (You may know microbes by their other names, such as "germs" or "bacteria.") You can't get away from them: Microbes are everywhere. But don't worry—most microbes don't harm you, and many actually help you stay alive.
 - 2 Now, scientists say the microbes that live on our hands could be useful in a surprising way: fighting crime.
 - 3 When police visit the scene of a crime, they often look for fingerprints to try to identify the culprit. They can also look for other things, like hair, to figure out who was there. But according to a recent study, investigators could even use microbes to help crack a case.
 - 4 Every person has his or her own set of microbes that live on their hands, according to scientists at the University of Colorado at Boulder. That means that if you and your best friend were able to see and compare all the microbes that lived on both of your hands, your hands probably would look different. Some microbes would show up on your hand; others would live only on your friend's hand. Your mix of different kinds of hand microbes is unique—much like your fingerprint.
 - 5 The scientists in Colorado wanted to know whether this microbe mix could be used as a new kind of fingerprint—especially in a crime scene where fingerprints might be hard to find. The use of science to figure out what happened—such as studying fingerprints—is called forensics.
 - 6 Noah Fierer, one of the scientists, says microbe fingerprints are harder to hide. "You only need to smudge a fingerprint, but you can't sterilize a surface just by wiping it off," he told *Science News*.
 - 7 Fierer and the team of scientists knew that when people work on a computer, the microbes from their hands end up on the keyboard. (Think about the microbes that are on your keyboard—especially if many different people use it!)
-
- 8 So to do their experiment, the scientists compared the bacteria on the hands of three people to the bacteria found on each person's computer keyboard. For the study, the keyboards had been used only by the people who were being tested. The mix of microbes from each person's hands matched the mix of microbes on that person's keyboard. The scientists were easily able to tell the three people apart—just by looking at their keyboards.



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- 9 But that experiment was only on three people, so the scientists knew they had to test their idea against a larger population. Their next step was to collect bacteria samples from the palms and computer mice of nine people. When they compared those samples to the known microbe mix from the hands of 270 other people, the team again found a match. Nine times out of nine, the bacteria patterns lined up—and it was again easy to tell who had been using which mice. (The information on the microbe mixes from 270 people already existed as part of the Human Skin Microbiome project. The microbiome is the population of microbes that live in and on the human body.)
- 10 So far, so good—but there are a lot more than 270 criminals out there. Other scientists wonder whether the microbe fingerprint can really be that useful. "Right now we really have no idea how unique a person's skin microbiome is," Elizabeth Grice told *Science News*. Grice is a geneticist at the National Human Genome Research Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md.
- 11 Fierer agrees that scientists have a lot more work to do before the microbe fingerprint will be a useful tool.
- 12 In any case, it's something to think about. Even if you don't leave your fingerprints behind, your microbes may give you away.

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.5

Cell Phone Tattlers

by Emily Sohn

- 1 Your cell phone holds secrets about you. Besides the names and numbers that you've programmed into it, traces of your DNA linger on the device, according to a new study.
- 2 DNA is genetic material that appears in every cell. Like your fingerprint, your DNA is unique to you—unless you have an identical twin. Scientists today routinely analyze DNA in blood, saliva, or hair left behind at the scene of a crime. The results often help detectives identify criminals and their victims.
- 3 Meghan J. McFadden, a molecular biologist at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, heard about a crime in which the suspect bled onto a cell phone and later dropped the device. This made her wonder whether traces of DNA lingered on cell phones—even when no blood was involved.
- 4 To find out, she and a colleague collected phones from 10 volunteers. They used swabs to collect invisible traces of the users from two parts of the phone: the outside, where the user holds it, and the speaker, which is placed at the user's ear.



Pixabay

- 5 The scientists scrubbed the phones using a solution made mostly of alcohol. The aim of washing was to remove all detectable traces of DNA. The owners got their phones back for another week. Then the researchers collected the phones and repeated the swabbing of each phone once more.
- 6 The scientists discovered DNA that belonged to the phone's owner on each of the phones. Better samples were collected from the outside of each phone, but those swabs also picked up DNA that belonged to other people who had apparently also handled the phone.
- 7 Surprisingly, DNA showed up even in swabs that were taken immediately after the phones were scrubbed. That suggests that washing won't remove all traces of evidence from a criminal's device. So cell phones can now be added to the list of clues that can clinch a crime-scene investigation.

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.6

Need Those ZZZZZs: Young Night Owls Still Require Plenty of Sleep

by Kathiann M. Kowalski

1 You've got to get an early start tomorrow, but you're not sleepy yet. Blame your brain, at least in part.

2 Yet that same brain is still under construction. And much of that important work takes place on the night shift—while you sleep. Here's what's happening—and why it matters.

Hello, Night Owl!

3 Today's lifestyle is one reason for late bedtimes. Many teens don't finish with after-school activities, part-time jobs, dinner, chores, and homework until 10 p.m. or later. Add in some time for relaxing, and bedtime may not roll around until 11 p.m. or nearly midnight.

4 Those "relaxing" activities can actually delay sleep longer. Screens for television, games, computers, tablets, e-readers, and cell phones give off blue light. "The brain reads that as daylight," says Kyla Wahlstrom, an expert on education and sleep at the University of Minnesota.

5 In response, the brain cuts back melatonin, a hormone that promotes sleep, explains public health professor Lauren Hale at Stony Brook University. Plus, time is limited. "If you're doing more screen time, you're getting less sleep time," she says.

6 "There are emotions involved in going online," Hale adds. Falling asleep can be harder if texts, chat, social media, or even sports reports excite or upset you. Caffeine from sodas and energy drinks makes matters worse.

7 Even without modern technology, though, teens shift their circadian rhythm. That's the daily cycle for sleeping, waking, and various other activities. In particular, the brain's pineal gland starts releasing melatonin later. That's the "sleepy" hormone.

8 Teens' time shift is a little like the jet lag you'd feel traveling from New York to Colorado. Until your body adjusts, you'd stay up later despite the time change. But teens' brains stay in that later time zone.

Sleep Deprivation

- 9 The rest of the world doesn't shift, however. So most teens must head to school before they've gotten the 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). And that's a serious public health problem.
- 10 For one thing, lack of sleep makes it harder to pay attention. When studies compared teens who had earlier and later school start times, they found that those who had more time to sleep did better in class. They also suffered fewer accidents in sports, driving, and other activities.
- 11 Adequate sleep is important for learning too. "Basically at night the sleep processes all your information from the previous day," says Wahlstrom. She compares it to cleaning up a computer's hard drive.
- 12 Lack of sleep could hurt mental health. Studies have found an inverse correlation¹ between teens' amount of sleep and depression and other mental illnesses. As sleep time went down, the risks for the mental illnesses went up.
- 13 Beyond that, sleep-deprived teens report more relationship problems and feelings of inadequacy. "They just get overwhelmed," Wahlstrom says.
- 14 Having sleep cut short could curb the brain's processing of emotions from the previous day. For some reason, Wahlstrom says, "The negative stuff hangs on longer." Crankiness can result, especially if you don't feel well.
- 15 Other studies suggest sleep-deprived teens get sick more often. "Our immune system is negatively affected by inadequate sleep," notes psychologist and academic affairs vice president Amy Wolfson at Loyola University Maryland.
- 16 Weight control suffers from too little sleep too. "Hormonally, your body is saying 'eat more, eat more,'" explains Hale. And because lack of sleep lowers impulse control, you're more likely to grab chocolate cake than celery.
- 17 "You don't just think better and act better" when you get enough sleep, adds psychiatry professor Mary Carskadon at Brown University. "You look better." One study found that the more sleep people got, the more likely people were to find them attractive.

Under Construction

- 18 Just as importantly, burning the midnight oil can interfere with brain development. When teens hit puberty, the number of long brain waves drops during non-REM (rapid eye movement) sleep.
- 19 Neuroscientists Ian Campbell and Irwin Feinberg at the University of California, Davis, suggest the drop shows that the brain is pruning unnecessary connections between nerve cells. The brain loses some plasticity—the ability to adapt in response to injury or other big changes. But the process lets the brain mature. “It will streamline your brain—make it a more efficient adult brain,” explains Campbell.
- 20 Lots of issues remain for sleep researchers to explore. For now, though, studies are clear: Teens’ brains need sleep!
- 21 In August 2014, the AAP urged high schools nationwide to delay start times to at least 8:30 a.m. Later starts can let teens get a bit more sleep when their brains really want it. Unfortunately, not all schools can or will heed that advice. And you can’t easily change your body’s natural circadian rhythm.

¹**inverse correlation:** a relationship between two factors, where when the value of one factor goes up, the value of the second factor goes down

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.6

Telling Plastic to ‘Bag It’

by Patricia Smith

with reporting by William Yardley of The New York Times

Two years ago, a dead gray whale washed ashore in Seattle’s Puget Sound. When scientists examined the contents of the whale’s stomach, they found more than 20 plastic bags.

5 “It was a gut-wrenching experience for me,” says Robb Krehbiel, 23, of Seattle, “Nothing that we use for a few minutes should ever end up in the belly of a whale. That’s just so wrong.”

For the last seven months, Krehbiel has been working on a campaign to ban plastic grocery bags in Seattle. The ban passed in December and will go into effect July 1.

10 Seattle will join cities like San Francisco; San Jose, California; Portland, Oregon; Brownsville, Texas; and Westport, Connecticut, as well as the Outer Banks of North Carolina and several counties in Hawaii, that have already banned plastic grocery bags. And Washington, D.C., has begun charging a five-cent tax on plastic bags to discourage customers from using them.

15 Since 2009, 12 states have considered a variety of plastic-bag bans, according to The National Conference of State Legislatures. No statewide bans have passed. But the list of cities and counties with bag bans is growing.

Americans use between 70 billion and 100 billion plastic bags annually, with families taking home an average of 1,500 a year.

Paper Vs. Plastic

20 Environmental groups say plastic bags, which are made from petroleum products, increase America’s dependence on oil and are a chief cause of litter. It takes about 12 million barrels of oil to make the plastic bags used in the U.S. annually. Most plastic bags eventually end up in landfills, where it can take hundreds of years for them to decompose. But first, or instead, many become litter.

25 “They’re hanging from trees and littering our beaches,” says Eric Goldstein of the National Resources Defense Council, an environmental group.

Plastic bags are also a major source of pollution in the ocean, where they can harm sea turtles and other ocean creatures that mistake the bags for food and eat them.

But Mark Daniels of Hilex Poly, a plastics maker based in South Carolina, calls the bans “badly misguided efforts.”

30 He says 90 percent of Americans already reuse plastic grocery bags—as garbage bags, to pack school lunches, and to store household items.

“Moving consumers away from plastic bags only pushes people to less environmentally friendly options, such as paper bags, which require more energy to produce and transport, and reusable bags, which are not recyclable,” Daniels says.

35 The plastic-bag manufacturing industry employs 10,000 Americans, and bans jeopardize those jobs, the industry says.

The U.S. is not the only place where bans have been instituted. Plastic bags are now banned in several nations including China, Italy, France, Bangladesh, Brazil, and Rwanda. Other countries tax plastic bags to discourage their use. In Ireland, for example, a
40 15-cent-per-bag tax introduced in 2002 has reduced their use by more than 90 percent.

Plastic Bottle Bans

Environmentalists in recent years have also targeted disposable plastic bottles for many of the same reasons they’ve set their sights on bags. The town of Concord, Massachusetts; several national parks, including the Grand Canyon; and a growing list of universities now ban the sale of disposable water bottles. A handful of big cities, like San Francisco and
45 Seattle, ban the sale of plastic water bottles in government offices.

The plastic-bag bans already in effect have had a dramatic effect on litter, some officials say. In Brownsville, Texas, a plastic-bag ban in place for more than a year has eliminated more than 350,000 bags per day, according to former Mayor Pat Ahumada. He says the ban “transformed our city from littered and dirty to a much cleaner city.”

50 Under the Seattle ban, plastic bags will still be available for produce and bulk grocery items. The new law also imposes a five-cent fee on paper bags.

Three years ago, Seattle city officials approved a 20-cent-per-bag fee on paper and plastic bags. The idea was to create a financial incentive to reduce pollution; the fee was supposed to prompt people to bring reusable bags with them to shop.

55 But before the 2008 fee could take effect, the plastic-bag industry led a petition drive that forced the issue onto a citywide ballot. In August 2009, in the midst of the recession and after the industry spent \$1.4 million on the campaign, Seattle voters rejected the fee. It’s not yet clear if the plastic bag industry will mount a similar campaign this time.

60 If there’s a fight, Krehbiel, the Seattle activist, will be one of those arguing to keep the ban.

“It’s not going to be a silver bullet that solves all our environmental problems,” he says. “But my thinking is you do what you can, when you can, where you can.”

Plastic Bags: By the Numbers

1,500

Average number of plastic shopping bags American families take home annually.

12 million

Barrels of oil it takes each year to make the plastic bags used in the U.S.

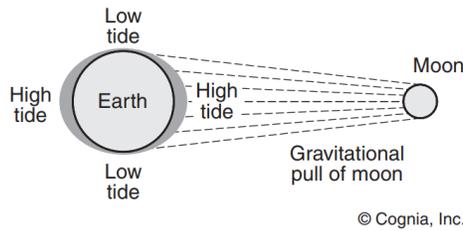
10,000

Number of U.S. jobs in the plastic-bag manufacturing industry.



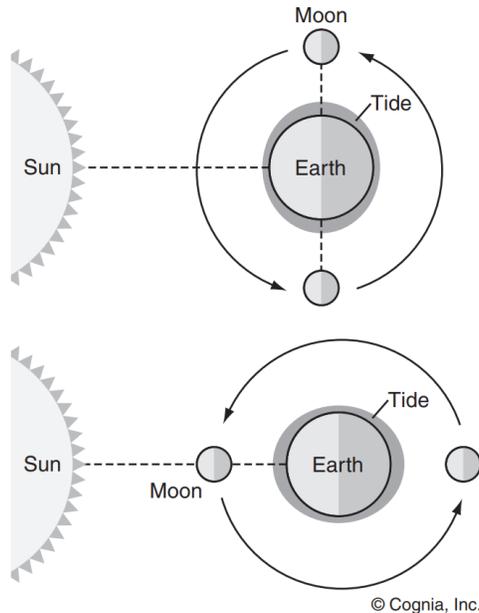
Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.7

How Tides Work
by Archibald Williams



The Tides:

- 1 All bodies have an attraction for one another. The earth attracts the moon, and the moon attracts the earth. Now, though the effect of this attraction cannot be seen on land, it can easily be seen on the water, which covers a large portion of the earth's surface. The moon attracts the water most powerfully at two points, that nearest to it and that furthest away from it. Since the earth and the water revolve as one mass each day, every point on the circumference would be daily nearest to and furthest from the moon at regular times, and wherever there is ocean two different tides would occur. (It should be clearly understood that the tides are not great currents, but only a thickening of the layer of water. The incoming rush of the tide is only a sign of the change in water level.)
- 2 The moon travels round the earth once in twenty-eight days, but because the rotation of the earth and the revolution of the moon differ, there are always slight differences in tide schedules, which occur at times a little more than every twelve hours.
- 3 The sun, as well as the moon, attracts the ocean, but with less power, since it is so much further away. At certain periods of the month the sun, earth, and moon are all in line. Sun and moon then pull together, and we get the highest, or spring tides. When sun and moon pull at right angles to one another as the earth and moon rotate, the pull from the moon is canceled by the pull from the sun, and we get the lowest, or neap tides.



"The Tides" from *How It Works* by Archibald Williams. Newdifi Media. In the Public Domain.

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.9

A Sticky Problem for Farmers

by Nathan Aaseng

TIRED OF WRESTLING WITH THE ROCKY, stump-cluttered soil of New England, farmers in the early 19th century often followed rumors of better land to the midwestern United States. There, in states such as Illinois and Iowa, they found just what they were looking for: prairies full of rich, black dirt that promised to pump life into seeds as fast as
5 they were planted.

Unfortunately, many settlers soon felt like thirsty sailors in the middle of the ocean—water everywhere but not a drop to drink. Rich soil surrounded them, but their equipment could not plow it. That was the problem a blacksmith named John Deere faced when he arrived in Grand Detour, Illinois, in 1836.

10 His Illinois neighbors had been desperate for a blacksmith ever since they had settled in Grand Detour. No sooner did Deere set foot in town than he found a line of farmers eager to offer him business. Two days after his arrival in Grand Detour, he was hard at work fixing broken equipment.

15 While working at his shop, Deere frequently heard complaints from farmers about the soil. Their early excitement about the richness of the soil and the ease with which a plow could break the sod had turned to frustration. The soil was too rich. Instead of falling away from the plow like sandy New England soil, it stuck. Farmers had to stop every few seconds to scrape the clumped dirt off their iron plowshares with large wooden paddles. They might as well have been plowing through a rocky field for all the progress they were
20 making. Some farmers were so discouraged by the sticky soil that they left in search of new land; others were ready to join them.

Deere decided to look into the problem. From his previous work on plows, he knew that dirt was less likely to stick to highly polished metal. That thought was in the back of his mind when he visited a sawmill in 1837 and noticed a broken circular saw made of
25 steel, a polished metal that was too expensive to be widely used for implements. Steel had never been used to make a plowshare.¹

Deere took the broken saw blade home with him and began working on a better plow. He knew that polished steel was not the whole answer; the shape of the plow's bottom was also important.

¹ Historians now believe that the first steel plowshare was made by John Lane in 1833. However, John Deere was the first to make steel plowshares commercially successful.

30 The plow Deere wanted to make would have to cut deeply into the soil at a sharp angle so that dirt would fall off, yet it could not put too much burden on the horses pulling it. After some experiments, Deere found the curved shape he needed and pounded the steel saw blade into that shape. He then built a plow, complete with oak handles, and brought it to the farm of his neighbor, Lewis Crandall.

35 While an anxious crowd of Grand Detour farmers watched, Crandall tried the new plow. He pronounced it a success. Not only did dirt fall away cleanly from the blade, but the plow also turned the soil more quickly than the old cast-iron plows.

Other farmers wanted one of Deere's "self-scouring" plows. The blacksmith could not meet the instant demand, however. For one thing, polished steel was hard to find. Deere
40 could not count on a steady supply of broken saw blades to use as raw material. Steel was only available from England, and it was expensive to import. There was no such thing as mass production in the blacksmithing business; plows were made one at a time according to each customer's needs. Deere and his new partner in the business, Leonard Andrus, manufactured only 2 "self-scouring" plows in 1838 and 10 the following year.

45 Production gradually increased, however, as Deere imported greater quantities of expensive English steel. Forty handmade plows left his shop in 1840 and, after expanding his workshop to include a foundry in 1843, Deere's production rose to 400 plows a year.

Until then, Deere still considered himself a blacksmith—his plow was just one part of his craft. But after seeing that he could easily sell as many plows as he could make, even
50 using costly English steel, the blacksmith decided to devote his time to manufacturing plows. In 1846 he found a Pittsburgh steel firm that could supply him with all the steel he needed for a lower price than what the English steel cost. The following year, he moved his business to Moline, Illinois, where the Mississippi River provided water power and transportation.

55 During the early years, Deere's sales strategy consisted of loading a wagon with plows and visiting farms until all his merchandise was sold. He rarely had to travel far. Producing plows before they were ordered was an innovative approach to sales. By 1857 the company, which he had reorganized with new partners under the name John Deere & Company, was making and selling 10,000 plows a year—nearly seven times as many as he
60 had sold just seven years earlier.

A relentless perfectionist, Deere kept tinkering with his plows, trying to make them better. He came out with 10 new versions of his plow in a single year. While this slowed down his production ability, it ensured Deere a solid reputation among his customers. Deere plows became world famous in the 1870s when they outshone the competition in a
65 demonstration in France. That same decade, the company built its first riding plow and designed the leaping deer as its trademark.

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.9

Lewis Latimer

by Stephen Currie

Though electric light was slow to catch on among the public, it was evident to scientists and inventors across America that a new age was dawning. Electricity, they realized, was the wave of the future.

Lewis Latimer

5 One of the first Americans to recognize the potential of electricity was a black man named Lewis Latimer. Born in Massachusetts in 1848, Latimer served in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War. When the war was over, Latimer returned to Massachusetts and got a job with a law firm that specialized in patents and inventions. At first he worked as an office boy, delivering messages and doing other simple tasks that involved little responsibility. Assignments like these made some sense, given his youth and relative
10 inexperience. It is also likely, however, that Latimer’s race kept him from being considered for positions that carried more authority—and a larger paycheck.

Latimer did not wish to remain an office assistant for long, though. He soon became intrigued by the work of the company’s draftsmen. To apply for a patent, inventors had to provide careful pictures that showed every detail of their inventions. Because most
15 inventors did not have the skill to execute these pictures on their own, patent lawyers typically had expert draftsmen on staff to create the diagrams. Latimer resolved to learn everything he could about drafting. He studied drawing techniques at home and practiced them whenever he could. Before long, his bosses recognized his talent and promoted him to the post of draftsman. By 1875 he was the head draftsman for the firm.
20 As a later newspaper report put it, Latimer had been “thrust upward by his singular talent and drive.”

Latimer’s drawing work brought him into contact with many inventors. The most famous of these was Alexander Graham Bell, best known as the inventor of the telephone. Latimer made several drawings which helped Bell claim the patents he sought. To draw
25 these designs as accurately as possible, it was necessary for Latimer to learn as much as he could about Bell’s work. In the process Latimer became interested in the principles of electricity, principles which underlay much of what Bell was doing. As Latimer read more and more about electric power, he became convinced that this form of energy could help Americans in new and important ways.

Patents

30 In the late 1870s Latimer began looking for a job that would allow him time to pursue
his new interests in technology. He was eventually offered a position at a company called
the United States Electric Lighting Corporation. The head of the company, Hiram Maxim,
was already well known among scientists for his work with electric power. Though
Thomas Edison had already patented the first truly effective electric light bulb, Maxim
35 believed he could improve on Edison’s design. In particular, Maxim thought he could
increase the life span of the bulb. Toward that end, he hired the most intelligent and hard-
working people he could find—including Latimer.

Latimer spent his first few months in Maxim’s employ trying to improve the bulb’s
filament—the wirelike assembly inside the bulb that gives off the actual light. In 1881, just
40 a year after joining Maxim’s firm, Latimer and a colleague patented a new and more
efficient way of making filaments, using what their application called “a continuous strip
of carbon secured to metallic wires.” The new procedure resulted in better, cheaper light
bulbs even than Edison had been able to produce. In the next months Latimer went on to
patent several more inventions, each of which made light bulbs longer lasting and easier to
45 manufacture—and each of which brought more money to the corporation. Maxim’s
confidence in Latimer had paid off.

Latimer did not spend all his time inventing. His work had made him an authority on
electric lighting, and Maxim consequently gave him more and more responsibility. Maxim
sent him to Philadelphia and other U.S. cities to oversee factory operations. Later, Latimer
50 traveled to England to set up a new factory and to Montreal, Canada, to guide workers in
installing electric lights in train stations. In Montreal he even learned some French to
communicate with employees who spoke little or no English. “This was my mighty lesson,”
he wrote years later. “My day was spent climbing telegraph poles and locating arc lamps
on them with the assistance of my laborers who seemed much impressed with my effort to
55 speak their native language.”

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.9

In this excerpt, Justin invites his new friend, Jinsen, to visit his father’s art studio over spring break.

Excerpt from *Buddha Boy*

by Kathe Koja

We were walking home, on a day finally more spring than winter, chirping birds and actual sun, snow lumps melted down to visible grass, heading this time to my house because the banner was pretty much finished, only minor touch-ups left to do, nothing I could even pretend to help with. So today we were going to look through art books,
5 Picasso and Klee and Monet, all the stuff I’d gotten from my dad and “He’s working on a new piece now,” I said. “It’s black-and-white and big as a car, he says. . . . You know, I’m going to visit him for spring break. Would you—do you want to come with?”

“To your dad’s studio, you mean? Really?” and he smiled, a big smile, we both did, but then “For a whole week?” he said; his smile dwindled. “My great-aunt—I don’t know.”

10 “You mean she’ll say no?” That wavery smile, *Oh Michael*, she didn’t seem like the bossy type but “She can check it out with my dad first. Or he could call her—”

“No, I mean I don’t know if I can leave her on her own for that long. Maybe if someone came to check, made sure she was OK—”

15 I almost volunteered Audrey, *Hey, my mom could do it*, but then I thought I ought to ask her first. Still, “Do you always have to, to worry about that stuff?” I asked, as we turned down my street, winding sidewalks beneath elms bare-branched to show last year’s birds’ nests, squirrels’ nests, winter-worn but still intact. The Dalmatian on the corner sniffed through his redwood gate, then barked as we passed, a sharp fierce noise, *strangers!* “It’s not fair to you, why can’t she just—”

20 “She’s old,” he said, which wasn’t really an answer but somehow it shut me up, because it was true, she *was* old, old and frail, we walked along in silence until “Your street,” he said, as we turned up the driveway. “All the trees, and everything. . . . It’s nice.”

25 He thought our house was nice, too, nice and big, which compared to his I guess it was, but I’d stopped seeing his house as small, or shabby, especially his room, which made mine look like a dumping ground for “King Consumer,” too much junk piled way too high, stuff I never used or didn’t need, or even really want. It was strange, as if I were seeing through his eyes, like catching a glimpse of myself in a mirror, a mirror I didn’t know was there.

30 “How about some herbal tea?” Audrey asked, Audrey who followed us into the kitchen, Audrey who seemed to like Jinsen instantly. “Or oolong, I have oolong,” like *shaved head and dragon shirt* must equal *tea drinker*, no stereotypes there.

“We’ll just have Cokes,” I said, annoyed—until I saw Jinsen’s smile, smiling at Audrey, almost wistful and *His mom*, I thought. *She’s gone*.

“Tea’s good, too,” I said.

35 We spent a while going through the art books—he liked Picasso best, the blunt bent faces, the force behind the brush—but Jinsen looked longest at my dad’s painting, looked and touched, one finger gentle on the whorls and flecks of paint. “I don’t use oils,” he said, “yet. Mostly I do acrylics. . . . Does your dad ever sell his paintings?”

“Not a lot; sometimes. He says he sells just enough to buy the paint to do more.”

40 I picked up my cup, the tea was cold and “When my parents died,” Jinsen said, looking down at the painting in his hands, “there was a settlement, and insurance money too, I guess. My great-aunt had it put in some kind of trust, like for when I’m twenty-one. But some of it,” red and green, red and green, tracing the circle around, “she gave to me. And that’s what I spent it on.”

45 I thought of the tackle box, the paints and brushes. “All of it?”

“All of it. She told me it was mine and I should do whatever I thought was best. So I thought, what would Kim do with it? And then I knew. . . . Kim always told me I ought to go to art school.”

“Well, once you get that internship, you—”

50 “Who knows if I’ll get it? If Keeley doesn’t like the banner—”

“How can he not like it? It’s great, it’s—the lion looks alive, all of it is alive—” in spring green and crimson and smoky gray, ideograms like water flowing beneath, STUDENTS OF ASIA AT CAC, and “If he hasn’t gone blind,” I said, “he’ll see how great it is.”

55 “Maybe,” he said, and shrugged, but in that moment his face, his gaze, was so still that I could see all the way to the bottom, like looking into a deep clear pond, and what I saw there was a longing so intense that it startled me, a want that was a need, like needing food or air. “I did my best,” he said, and looked away. “I just wish I’d had that other scroll to show him, too.”

“Don’t worry.” I said; because I knew, I was sure. “The banner will be enough.”

60 And then “Knock knock,” from Audrey, opening the door a crack. “Jinsen, would you like to stay for dinner? I’m making chicken stew,” and “Sure,” he said, head turned to smile up at her; suddenly he seemed younger, almost like a kid. “Sure, thanks.”

Audrey outdid herself with the meal—stew, fresh-baked rolls, corn on the cob—and Jinsen ate everything she put on the table, thanking her again and again. During dinner
65 she asked her usual million questions—what kind of music did he listen to, did he play any sports, how did he like school (I had to roll my eyes at that one)—but to Jinsen, I guess, it didn’t seem intrusive. Maybe he liked having a mom give him the friendly third degree, even if it wasn’t his mom.

He ended up staying till almost nine o’clock, I wondered what his great-aunt would say
70 but “It’s Tuesday,” he said to me, as Audrey searched for her car keys. “Tuesday nights she goes to bingo with our neighbor. . . . Thanks again,” to Audrey, “for driving me home.”

“Oh, it’s no trouble at all. Do you have your coat?” which made me cringe a little, but “Well,” Jinsen said, past the closing door, “the thing with that is—”

I cleared up the dinner stuff and loaded the dishwasher, as a way to say thank you to
75 Audrey. She didn’t come back right away, and when she did I was ready for some more *Oh that poor boy* no-jacket stuff, but “What a sweet family,” she said; her voice was soft, almost sad, but in a good way, the way it is when something you see touches you, moves your heart inside. “Jinsen is quite a remarkable young man. And his great-aunt is just adorable—”

80 “You met her?”

“Only for a minute—You know,” hanging up her coat, “your father mentioned that you were asking Jinsen along to his place, for vacation. Do you think his great-aunt might need a little help while he’s gone? Just someone looking in, stopping by for a cup of tea or something. . . . I would have suggested it myself, but I didn’t want to seem pushy.”

85 “I don’t think it would be pushy at all,” I said, with a little smile; the tickle of karma again? “I think it would be nice.”

Text Reference for MC Assessment Item RI.7.9

Basil's grandmother is giving the new girl in seventh-grade, Tenzie, a tour of their unusual house. Tenzie is trying to become friends with Basil and teasingly nicknames him Pesto.

Excerpt from *One + One = Blue*

by MJ Auch

Gram took Tenzie around the room, showing her the various projects she had going. That's how Gram earned money, by selling her fabric and stained-glass designs from her website. Even though Gram tended to be disorganized, she had managed to keep her small business going well enough to support us. Lately, she seemed to be sending out more
5 orders than ever.

The cell phone rang in the kitchen, and Gram ran to answer it. She could never remember to keep it in her pocket.

That's when I looked over at Tenzie and realized she was crying. I didn't know what to say. I hadn't cried since I was a little kid. This would be the hitch with having a friend
10 because it would be my responsibility to ask what was wrong and try to make it better, wouldn't it? I decided to turn away and hope that Gram's phone conversation would be short and she'd be back to handle this before it got embarrassing.

Then Tenzie made a loud choking sound. She had her hand over her mouth, and her cheeks were glassy with tears. "You're so lucky."

15 "Me? Why?"

"You live in this mind-boggling place. It can look just the way you and your grandmother want it." Tenzie quickly wiped her eyes. "You don't know how good you have it, Pesto." She went over to a bookshelf and picked up a picture in a frame. "Who's this?"

Ordinarily I would have made something up, but I was set off balance by Tenzie's
20 crying and quick recovery. "It's me and Carly—my mother—when I was little," I said.

"She's beautiful and looks so young for a mother. Where is she now? At work?"

"No. She's gone," I said.

Tenzie looked up, startled.

"No, not that kind of gone. She just left—probably not long after that picture was
25 taken. Took off to Hollywood to become an actress."

"Really?" Tenzie wiped the dust from the glass and studied the picture more closely. "Have I ever seen her in anything?"

“Not unless you get LA used-car commercials on your TV. She’s done a couple of those. We haven’t heard from her in a while.”

30 “It must be fun to go visit her in Hollywood, though.” Tenzie carefully replaced the picture on the shelf. “Where’s your father?”

“Never met him.” I didn’t want to get into my family stuff with Tenzie. Then there was a flash of light, followed by a loud boom that set the sun catchers quivering. Just as I noticed that there was no sun left for them to catch, the dome was pelted with rain. I
35 was saved.

Gram appeared in the doorway. “Looks as if your father was right this time, Tenzie.”

“Yeah,” Tenzie said. “Maybe he’s finally getting the hang of this meteorology business.” She grinned at me. “We might even get to do some wall painting for a change.”

40 For a storm that wasn’t supposed to happen, the rain put on a spectacular show. There was lightning that crackled all the way to the ground followed by one clap of thunder after another.

“I bet Dad is really enjoying this,” Tenzie said. “He loves weather extremes. The last place we lived was San Jose, where it was in the seventies and sunny almost every day. Dad got so bored, he started making things up for his weather report. Naturally, he
45 got fired.”

A sudden stream of water splatted on the floor, then another and another. “Grab the pans, Basil,” Gram shouted. She kept a supply of old dented thrift shop pots and pans in the corner of the hippie room, because every time it rained, the dome leaked something fierce. The three of us ran around the room sliding pots under the leaks.

50 The sound of the pans catching rain was almost musical. The bigger the pot, the lower the note, and each leak had its own tempo of drips, so there was a lot of syncopation going on. Soon we had an orchestra of nine pans in strategic places catching water.

Gram grabbed a small African drum called a *djembe* from under her stained-glass worktable and started beating her own rhythm on it. “I use the drum to unwind when
55 I’ve been working on a glass project that sets my nerves on edge,” she called over the din. “You can actually get your own pulse to speed up or slow down with these things. There are more drums under there. Help yourself, Tenzie. Drumming isn’t meant to be a solitary thing.”

60 Tenzie pulled out my favorite drum and started in, following Gram’s rhythm as if she had been drumming all her life. “This is amazing,” she said, throwing back her head and laughing.

Gram’s eyes were closed now, and she slipped into her own little world. I knew that feeling, where the cadence of the drum carried you away somewhere. But I wasn’t being carried away anywhere. I was watching from the outside while my grandmother and my
65 friend . . . no, guest . . . bonded without me. First Tenzie had taken over my desk in the cafeteria, then she had invaded my seat on the bus. Now she was squeezing herself into my family.

And I didn’t like it.