ENGLISH 7 COMMON TASKS

Unit One: Identity
7.1.1 Present a brief speech to the class that highlights an aspect of a person’s identity.*
7.1.2 Explain how a character is revealed through interactions with other characters.
7.1.3 Write a personal narrative about a significant influence on your identity.
7.1.4 Write an argument about a central idea or an issue raised by a text.

Unit Two: A Sense of Place
7.2.1 Compare how a fictional text and a nonfiction text portray the same subject.
7.2.2 Write a short story that shows how setting helps shape character.
7.2.3 Explain how an author develops a theme in a narrative.*
7.2.4 Research the history of a nearby place and present an argument about its value or importance.

Unit Three: Perspectives
7.3.1 Write an analysis of how an author uses narrative to influence readers’ understanding of history.*
7.3.2 Write a narrative that explores a different perspective than one offered in a text.
7.3.3 Write an essay that explains at least two different perspectives on an issue or problem of interest.
7.3.4 Evaluate how objectively a subject is presented in an informational video segment.

Unit Four: Expressions
7.4.1 Create an original work that presents or supports an argument.
7.4.2 Write an analysis of how an author uses language to establish a particular tone.
7.4.3 Analyze how the performance of a written text affects the impact of the words.*
7.4.4 Prepare and perform a scene from A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

* Teachers who wish to make more time for re-teaching a common task may choose to omit these starred tasks or blend them into others, but the relevant skills and concepts must be incorporated into instruction during the unit.
Unit 7.1: Identity

In Unit 1, students consider how a variety of factors shapes our actions, thoughts, and decisions. The questions of who we are and how we become ourselves are especially relevant to seventh grade students, and focusing on what makes up the identities of complex characters allows students to consider how they define themselves. The words we select to describe ourselves and express our ideas become increasingly important as we mature and develop more nuanced opinions. This attention to language and expression is central to the tasks of the unit as students read complex texts, think critically about ideas, and hone their ability to use language with clarity and precision.

Students begin by creating a portfolio to track their progress as readers, writers, and critical thinkers. Students have multiple opportunities to engage in the Core Learning Practices as they explore character development and consider how an individual’s identity can be shaped by interactions with others. Turning this reflection inward, they also examine factors that contribute to their own evolving sense of self. They continue to explore and develop various aspects of voice through narrative, argument, and explanatory writing. Students also enhance their ability to use language in front of an audience and consider how the spoken word differs from the written word. Grammar, usage, and vocabulary study draw from the texts read, thus providing a context for understanding and then informing effective writing practices.

Essential Questions

- How do we decide who we are, and who we want to be?
- How do the things we read and experience change our understanding of the world and our place in it?
- How do factors beyond our control contribute to our sense of identity?
- Do our thoughts and actions define us, or does our self-definition determine our thoughts and actions?

Enduring Understandings

- Identity is a complex concept that brings together many disparate parts.
- Our sense of identity becomes more complicated and nuanced as we read and experience new things.
- Writers use language to act upon and react to the world around them.
- We are constantly creating and refining the self we want to inhabit.
Throughout the year, students should read and discuss a combination of classic literature and contemporary works from a diverse group of writers. Students need to read a variety of non-print texts and print texts from different genres, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and short stories. Employ literature circles to provide students with a structured choice of texts. Close reading coupled with inquiry based discussion leads to effective writing. Since advanced readers use multiple strategies to create meaning, understand the nuances of language, and connect reading to their own lives, seek content that is provocative, ambiguous, complex, and emotionally challenging.

“To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing.”

Common Core State Standards

Fiction

Adam of the Road
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
Catherine, Called Birdy
Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village
Nothing But the Truth
The Sword in the Stone
The Wednesday Wars
Where the Lilies Bloom

Elizabeth J. Gray
Mark Twain
Karen Cushman
Laura Amy Schlitz
Avi
T.H. White
Gary D. Schmidt
Vera and Bill Cleaver

Nonfiction

Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story
Julian Nava: My Mexican American Journey
The Story of My Life

Ben Carson
Julian Nava
Helen Keller

“The Difference a City Year Makes”
“My Furthest-Back Person”
“Names/Nombres”
“On Women’s Right to Vote”
“Offerings at the Wall”

The Boston Herald
Jerry Spinelli
Alex Haley
Julia Alvarez
Susan B. Anthony
Smithsonian Institution
Poetry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Dusting”</td>
<td>Julia Alvarez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If I Can Stop One Heart from Breaking”</td>
<td>Emily Dickinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from “Song of Myself”</td>
<td>Walt Whitman</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Thumbprint”</td>
<td>Eve Merriam</td>
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<tr>
<td>“To You”</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The World is Not a Pleasant Place to Be”</td>
<td>Nikki Giovanni</td>
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Short Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The Cat and the Coffee Drinkers”</td>
<td>Max Steele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A Crown of Wild Olive”</td>
<td>Rosemary Sutcliff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Harrison Bergeron”</td>
<td>Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“One Ordinary Day, with Peanuts”</td>
<td>Shirley Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Seventh Grade”</td>
<td>Gary Soto</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Thank You Ma’am”</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The War of the Wall”</td>
<td>Toni Cade Bambara</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The White Umbrella”</td>
<td>Gish Jen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Zebra”</td>
<td>Chaim Potok</td>
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Drama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Christmas Carol</td>
<td>Charles Dickens</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adapted by Frederick Gaines</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Anthologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizens of the World: Readings in Human Rights</td>
<td>The Great Books Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Books Roundtable Level 2</td>
<td>The Great Books Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(replaces Junior Great Books Series 7*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Language of Literature 7</td>
<td>Holt McDougal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Am I? (Literature &amp; Thought Series)</td>
<td>Perfection Learning Corporation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Continue to use Junior Great Books Series 7 if available in your school; no longer available for order through The Great Books Foundation.*
Throughout the year, students should read and discuss a combination of classic literature and contemporary works from a diverse group of writers. Students need to read a variety of non-print texts and print texts from different genres, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and short stories. Employ Literature circles to provide students with a structured choice of texts. Instruct students to use strategies before, during, and after reading to interact with texts. Provide opportunities for students to make predictions and connections as well as to question, clarify, visualize, and evaluate their reading. Close reading coupled with inquiry based discussion leads to effective writing.

“To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing.”

Common Core State Standards

In addition to the titles listed below, you may choose to use any of the titles listed on the Advanced English 7.1 Texts list.

**Fiction**

*Cousins*  
*Freak the Mighty*  
*The Midwife’s Apprentice*  
*My Name is Brian*  
*The Outsiders*  
*Red Kayak*  
*Savvy*  
*The Sign of the Chrysanthemum*  
*Welcome Home, Jellybean*

Virginia Hamilton  
Rodman Philbrick  
Karen Cushman  
Jeanne Betancourt  
S. E. Hinton  
Priscilla Cummings  
Ingrid Law  
Katherine Paterson  
Marlene Fanta Shyer

**Nonfiction**

*My Life in Dog Years*  
“The Difference a City Year Makes”  
“The Sign of the Chrysanthemum”  
“My Furthest-Back Person”  
“Names/Nombres”  
“My Name is Brian”  
“Offerings at the Wall”  
“The Boston Herald”  
Jerry Spinelli  
Alex Haley  
Julia Alvarez  
Susan B. Anthony  
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“The War of the Wall”  Toni Cade Bambara
“Zebra”  Chaim Potok

Drama

A Christmas Carol  Charles Dickens
adapted by Frederick Gaines

Anthologies

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Great Books Roundtable Level 2  The Great Books Foundation
(replaces Junior Great Books Series 7*)
The Language of Literature 7  Holt McDougal
Who Am I? (Literature & Thought Series)  Perfection Learning Corporation

*Continue to use Junior Great Books Series 7 if available in your school; no longer available for order through The Great Books Foundation.
Course Terms

Alliteration
Allusion
Author’s purpose
Central idea
Character trait
Characterization
Connotation
Contemporary
Denotation
Dialogue
Figurative language
Flashback
Foreshadowing
Formatting
Graphics
Humor
Hyperbole
Imagery
Inference
Interpretation
Irony
Metaphor
Monologue
Montage
Mood
Motivation
Multimedia
Onomatopoeia
Paraphrase
Personal narrative
Personification

Perspective
Plot structure
▪ Exposition
▪ Inciting incident
▪ Rising action
▪ Conflict (external and internal)
▪ Climax
▪ Falling action
▪ Resolution

Point of view
▪ First person
▪ Third person

Portfolio
Refrain
Repetition
Research question
Rhetorical devices
Rhyme
Rhythm
Self–reflection
Sensory details
Setting
Simile

6–Traits of Writing
▪ Ideas & Development
▪ Organization
▪ Voice
▪ Word Choice
▪ Sentence Fluency
▪ Conventions

Stanza
Subplot
Summarize
Suspense
Symbol
Theme
Tone
Topic
Voice
Works cited

Writing

Purposes
▪ Argument
▪ Informative/Explanatory
▪ Narrative
▪ Research and synthesis
▪ Creative

Methods of development
▪ Cause-Effect
▪ Classification
▪ Comparison-Contrast
▪ Definition

Process
▪ Prewriting
▪ Drafting
▪ Revising
▪ Editing
▪ Publishing
Language Standards

Teachers are expected always to teach grammar concepts and other language conventions in the context of writing; the goal is not for students to be able to memorize terms, but to be able to think clearly about ways to improve their own writing. Exercises in sentence combining, expansion, and imitation offer ways students can compose more sophisticated and effective sentences. Separated and simulated instruction may be used to introduce concepts, especially those listed as focus skills below; include integrated instruction to ensure that students apply these and other skills in their writing.

Common Core Language Standards for Grade 7

L.7.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
   a) Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences.
   b) Choose among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas.
   c) Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.

L.7.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
   a) Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie but not He wore an old[,] green shirt).
   b) Spell correctly.

L.7.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
   a) Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.
Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting fragments and run-ons (L.4.1f).

Correctly use frequently confused words (L.4.1g).

- The document Commonly Confused Words, found in the Course Materials section of the Instruction Center course page for English 7, outlines the expected sequence for teaching and reviewing the most common of these terms. Teachers should address those words identified at grade 7 but also use student writing samples and portfolios to review words that may need further instruction and practice from earlier years.

- The words listed for English 7, which may appear on formative assessments and final exams, include the following:

  allowed/aloud  weather/whether
  it’s/its        ware/we’re/wear/were/where
  passed/past    who’s/whose
  than/then

- Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others’ writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language (L.6.1e).

- Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style (L.6.3a).
Vocabulary acquisition continues to be a necessary and vital part of the English curriculum. Vocabulary study not only enhances understanding of the writer’s craft—how word choice creates character, defines mood, and sets tone—but also is the key to a richer reading of all texts. Determining meaning and understanding word structure give students the tools to become independent, strategic readers of challenging texts. As students learn about the variety and richness of English, they should be encouraged to use language that is both precise and expressive.

L.7.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

a) Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

b) Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., belligerent, bellicose, rebel).

c) Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

d) Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.7.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

a) Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical, and mythological allusions) in context.

b) Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.

c) Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending).

L.7.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.