



# Language Arts Benchmarks

## 7

**Dear Parents,**

This document was produced in an effort to give you a preview of the skills and concepts introduced at this grade level. Teachers seek an active partnership with parents. Please make opportunities to reinforce the skills developed in grade seven in your home. Each teacher combines individual creativity with a school philosophy of education to teach students. Different strategies will be used to approach the instruction of these skills and concepts. These benchmarks represent the skills and strategies seventh graders must know and be able to do independently by the end of the year. We invite you to meet with your child's teacher so that you will understand how you can reinforce what is taught in your child's classroom.

**Reading & Responding:**

**In the area of reading, your seventh grade students will be able to:**

- q Determine the meaning of words using prefixes (e.g., ante, contra, counter) and suffixes (e.g., al, ant, l, is)
- q Infer word meanings through identification and analysis of analogies and other word relationships.
- q Use idioms, analogies, metaphors, and similes to infer the literal meaning of phrases in literary texts.
- q Identify the connotation and denotation of new words and apply them in speaking.
- q **Identify and use synonyms, antonyms, homographs, and homophones in context to determine word meanings and to write sentences.**

- q Read at least 10 pieces of literature appropriate for their independent reading level to read for a variety of purposes. (e.g., literary experience, to gain information, to perform a task for enjoyment)
- q **Read independently in class for a minimum of 75 minutes weekly between LA I and II classes.**
- q Read prose, poems, or dramatic dialogues aloud with fluency, using clear diction, tempo, volume and phrasing.
- q Identify how the plot and characterization influence resolution of story conflict.
- q Summarize text in a manner that reflects the main ideas, significant details, and underlying meaning.
- q Connect and clarify main ideas and concepts and identify their relationship to other sources, related topics, or prior experiences.
- q Identify use of the text structure (e.g., to gain information on a selected topic, complete a process)
- q Identify and trace the development of an author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective in a text (e.g., author's purpose)
- q **Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about the text and support them with textual evidence and experience.**
- q Generate literal, inferential, interpretative, and evaluative questions before, during, and after reading.
- q Analyze and apply a variety of focusing, monitoring, and assessing strategies during reading. (e.g., rereading, adjusting reading rate)
- q Predicts outcomes and actions in text based on contextual clues and prior knowledge and evaluate the accuracy of the prediction.
- q Explain characterization through thoughts, words, speech patterns, and deeds.
- q Explain how the literary elements (e.g., figurative language, metaphor) create meaning for readers.
- q Compare the works that express a universal theme (e.g., good and evil) and providing evidence to support ideas.
- q Compare original text to a summary and check its accuracy.
- q Compare and contrast information from different sources that address the same topic.
- q Identify the purpose of text.
- q Compare and contrast the ways similar themes are expressed in multiple literacy works, and explain how the them represents different views and values.

## **Producing Texts (e.g., Writing):**

### **In the area of writing, your seventh grade students will be able to:**

- q Write independently for an extended period of time to produce first drafts and final products.
- q Write independently to produce texts in a variety of forms yearly. (e.g., expository, narrative, letter writing, response to literature, persuasive)
- q Write formally and/or informally in class for a minimum of 75 minutes weekly between LA I and II.
- q Determine the purpose and topic of writing and select a form, point of view, and style (formal vs. informal) that are appropriate for the purpose and audience.
- q Write an organized, coherent composition, using transition among sentences and descriptions, which present a clear message or theme.
- q Use parallel structures (e.g., the same verb tense, word choice and/or phrases) to reinforce main ideas and coherence within a sentence and/or paragraphs.
- q Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, colorful modifiers, and active rather than passive voice when appropriate.
- q Support all statements and claims with relevant anecdotes, descriptions, facts, statistics, and/or specific information from personal experience and/or text.
- q Write to express personal ideas in a variety of ways (e.g., plays, biographies, short stories, autobiographies, and other writings) about an event, situation, or story. Use well-chosen details, reveal the writer's significance of, or the attitude about the subject, and purposefully use rhetorical elements such as figurative language, description, and symbolism. (e.g., write short stories, poetry, creative writing) **(Primarily LA I)**
- q Write letters that address audience needs, stated purpose, context, adheres to stated purposes, and follows the

conventional style for the type (e.g., letter, memo) using appropriate technical terms. **(Primarily LA II)**

- q *Informational texts*: Write essays of comparison/contrast, cause/effect and problem/solution for an intended audience and purpose that state the purpose of the paper, and begins to develop a thesis, follows an organizational pattern or form, and offer compelling evidence in the form of facts and details **(Primarily LA II)**
- q Write pieces and/or reports for an intended audience and purpose that convey a clear and accurate perspective on the subject, support the main ideas with facts, details, examples, and explanations, and pose relevant questions and tightly drawn questions about the topic.
- q *Persuasive texts*: Write to persuade an audience by selecting an appropriate form that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment, support arguments with detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning. **(Primarily LA II)**
- q Connect related ideas/topics to identify a topic for research.
- q Write, address and/or evaluate questions on a chosen topic for research.
- q Develop ideas leading to inquiry, investigation, data collection and research.
- q Read and use in writing the organizational features of printed texts such as the citations, bibliographic references, table of contents, and appendices to locate relevant information and to take notes.
- q Use electronic information and computerized library catalogs (when available) to research information for specific purposes.
- q Create a bibliography using consistent format and methodology for citations.
- q Give credit for both quoted and paraphrased information in the body of the piece using consistent format methodology for citations.
- q Use a variety of prewriting techniques to generate and record ideas (e.g., brainstorming, outlining, constructing graphic organizers, keeping notes on ideas.)
- q Provide an oral or written explanation of decisions about organizational patterns (e.g., form, purpose, audience, and topic) and sentence structure. (Peer, group, and/or teacher conferencing)
- q Self-edit and revise writing using Standard English conventions of language and appropriate print and non-print resources (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, spell-check software).
- q Publish at least two pieces of text in different forms throughout the year. (One piece from LA I and II)

- q Examine the logic of ideas, word choice, and transitions among paragraphs and passages by revising writing based on given or self-generated criteria. (rubric) (e.g., when writing to persuade, identify reasons, use strong elaboration, effective connotations, transition words, and close with a forceful conclusion.)
- q Use a consistent format and design to prepare writing for publication (e.g., final draft) (e.g., headings, margins, spacing, columns, page orientation) using electronic resources (when available) to enhance final product.
- q **Print and/or write in cursive neatly and legibly.**

### **Applying Standard English:**

#### **In the area of oral and written communication, your seventh grade students will be able to:**

- q Identify the prepositional phrase in any sentence: adjective or adverb.
- q Maintain noun-pronoun and subject-verb agreement (including when there is a phrase between the subject and verb) in writing. (CMT)
- q Use regular pronouns and interrogative pronouns appropriately in sentences: who, whose, that, whom, what, which, whoever, whomever, and whatever. (CMT)
- q Distinguish among simple sentences (one independent clauses), and complex compound sentences. (one independent clause and one dependent clause)
- q Determine the most effectively expressed revision of a group of sentences in need of combining. (CMT)
- q Use a comma after an introductory prepositional phrase (e.g., Under the spreading trees, the forest animals chased each other playfully) (CMT/CAPT)
- q Use a comma to set off nonrestrictive appositives (e.g., Jon Ross, the famous architect, designed my house.)
- q Capitalize the names of political parties and their members (e.g., Democratic Party) (CMT/CAPT)
- q Capitalize the abbreviations for names of organizations for names of organizations and countries. (e.g., NAACP, NFL) (CMT/CAPT)
- q Use suffixes to change words to different parts of speech and spell the words correctly: adjectives (e.g., ful, ish, ous, ic), nouns (e.g., ship, ment, tion, hood), and verbs. (e.g., ize, fy)
- q Spell a wide range of grade-level words, including commonly misspelled words, in his or her writing.
- q Spell words related to concepts being learned in other subject fields.

- q Choose specific nouns and verbs. (e.g., generality vs. specificity)
- q Revise for redundancy.
- q Identify words and expressions that have been absorbed into American culture from a variety of foreign languages.
- q Identify words and expressions in fiction selections and poetry that are not currently used in everyday language.
- q Identify the origins of a variety of English words.
- q Apply listening skills in a variety of settings, using note taking to assist listening when appropriate.
- q Apply listening skills in large and small group settings, constructing appropriate questions and response to the speaker's message.
- q Speak and respond clearly in various roles (e.g., leader, recorder, time keeper) in discussion groups.
- q Select and use verbal and non-verbal techniques to enhance communication to solve problems.
- q Choose vocabulary carefully, adapting it to the audience, purpose, and occasion.
- q Gather and convey information from listening to support or refute an idea.
- q Present a short dramatic presentation and/or reading.
- q Make inferences and draw conclusions based on tone of voice and/or mood.
- q Explain how the effects of rhythm and repetition contribute to meaning.
- q Identify and explain reasons for selecting a memory technique for learning a specific task.
- q Create visual aide, using technology (when available) to support presentations.
- q Support a position and acknowledge opposing views.
- q Speak in a variety of situations choosing an organizational pattern appropriate to the audience and purpose.
- q Generate with and/or without the teacher criteria to evaluate oral presentations and discussions.

## Exploring & Responding to Literature:

In the area of literature, your seventh grade students will be able to:

- q Identify the author's message and explain how the characteristics of different forms of prose (e.g., short story, novel, essay, nonfiction) from diverse cultures shape the meaning of the message.
- q Identify characteristics of different forms of poetry from diverse cultures and authors (e.g., couplets, ballad, lyric, haiku) **(Primarily LA I)**
- q Define *flashback* and identify the use of flashback as a literary device in fiction selections read or in television programs or films seen. **(Primarily LA I)**
- q Define *foreshadowing* and identify the use of foreshadowing as a literary device in fiction selections and narrative poems. **(Primarily LA I)**
- q Recognize *symbolism* as literary device in fiction and poetry selections and identify what given symbols represent \*e.g., the pearl in Steinbeck's *The Pearl* **(Primarily LA I)**
- q Identify the use of dialect in fiction, nonfiction, and poetic selections.
- q Identify the mood (or moods) of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections and explains how the mood contributes to the overall effect of the selections.
- q Identify the ways in which the author establishes the mood of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections (e.g., through events, the author's descriptive language, the characters' words or actions, the setting).
- q Identify and interpret figurative language in fiction and poetry selections, including alliteration, onomatopoeia, similes, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole.
- q Identify *propaganda* techniques that are used in advertisements, speeches, editorials, and other nonfiction materials. (e.g., bandwagon, name calling, plain folks, flag waving, glittering generalities, and innuendo). **(Primarily LA II)**
- q **Identify and analyze the characteristics of a variety of nonfiction texts. (Primarily LA II)**
- q Analyze the influence of culture, ethnicity, and historical eras on the themes and issues of literary texts.
- q Compare and contrast the motivations and reactions of characters and individuals including authors from different historical eras that confront similar challenges and situations.

- q Compare and contrast the representations of other cultures in fiction, poetry, and drama selections. (e.g. customs, themes, characters', individual, and people experiences)
- q Explain the literal meaning of a text, using additional resources to clarify one's response.
- q Analyze the author's view of human experience and character in order to relate it to one's own view.
- q Evaluate the effectiveness of the point of view (i.e., first person, second person, third person) in which given selections are written.
- q Judge the overall merit and aesthetic attributes of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections, based on standards discussed in a group (e.g., based on the effectiveness of the plot, characterization, theme, writing style, organization, point of view).
- q Analyze elements of classic novels
- q Analyze elements of contemporary novels representing a variety of cultures.
- q Analyze elements of classic and contemporary short stories representing a variety of cultures.
- q Analyze elements of classic and contemporary poetry representing a variety of cultures.
- q Analyze the themes of fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry selections and identifies details that support the themes.
- q Relate the themes of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections to his or her life.
- q Recognize an alternative perspective to the author's point of view in fiction and nonfiction selections.
- q Describe the writing styles used by authors of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections (e.g., descriptive, colorful language; long complex sentences; use of first person) and describe what the style contributes to the overall effect of the selections.
- q Analyze figurative language to fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections.
- q Analyze visual texts.
- q Explain the themes of plays.
- q Discuss the impact of the historical period, culture, and personal experiences of various authors on the fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, and/or plays they wrote.
- q Analyze persuasive techniques used in nonfiction selections.  
**(Primarily LA II)**
- q Analyze an opinion column in a newspaper to identify the writer's point of view and to judge the organization and clarity of the writing.**(Primarily LA II)**
- q Analyze news stories in a newspaper to determine the most important points and to judge the organization and clarity of the writing **(Primarily LA II)**

