

Grades 6–8 Text Exemplars

Stories

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. New York: Penguin, 1989. (1868)
From Chapter 2: “A Merry Christmas”

“Merry Christmas, little daughters! I’m glad you began at once, and hope you will keep on. But I want to say one word before we sit down. Not far away from here lies a poor woman with a little newborn baby. Six children are huddled into one bed to keep from freezing, for they have no fire. There is nothing to eat over there, and the oldest boy came to tell me they were suffering hunger and cold. My girls, will you give them your breakfast as a Christmas present?”

They were all unusually hungry, having waited nearly an hour, and for a minute no one spoke, only a minute, for Jo exclaimed impetuously, “I’m so glad you came before we began!”

“May I go and help carry the things to the poor little children?” asked Beth eagerly.

“I shall take the cream and the muffins,” added Amy, heroically giving up the article she most liked.

Meg was already covering the buckwheats, and piling the bread into one big plate.

“I thought you’d do it,” said Mrs. March, smiling as if satisfied. “You shall all go and help me, and when we come back we will have bread and milk for breakfast, and make it up at dinnertime.”

They were soon ready, and the procession set out. Fortunately it was early, and they went through back streets, so few people saw them, and no one laughed at the queer party.

A poor, bare, miserable room it was, with broken windows, no fire, ragged bedclothes, a sick mother, wailing baby, and a group of pale, hungry children cuddled under one old quilt, trying to keep warm.

How the big eyes stared and the blue lips smiled as the girls went in.

“Ach, mein Gott! It is good angels come to us!” said the poor woman, crying for joy.

“Funny angels in hoods and mittens,” said Jo, and set them to laughing.

In a few minutes it really did seem as if kind spirits had been at work there. Hannah, who had carried wood, made a fire, and stopped up the broken panes with old hats and her own cloak. Mrs. March gave the mother tea and gruel, and comforted her with promises of help, while she dressed the little baby as tenderly as if it had been her own. The girls meantime spread the table, set the children round the fire, and fed them like so many hungry birds, laughing, talking, and trying to understand the funny broken English.

“Das ist gut!” “Die Engel-kinder!” cried the poor things as they ate and warmed their purple hands at the comfortable blaze. The girls had never been called angel children before, and thought it very agreeable, especially Jo, who had been considered a ‘Sancho’ ever since she was born. That was a very happy breakfast, though they didn’t get any of it. And when they went away, leaving comfort behind, I think there were not in all the city four merrier people than the hungry little girls who gave away their breakfasts and contented themselves with bread and milk on Christmas morning.

“That’s loving our neighbor better than ourselves, and I like it,” said Meg, as they set out their presents while their mother was upstairs collecting clothes for the poor Hummels.

Media Text

Composer Mark Adamo details for an Opera America online course the process of adapting the novel to operatic form: <http://www.markadamo.com/course.pdf>

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. New York: Modern Library, 2001. (1876)
From Chapter 2: “The Glorious Whitewasher”

But Tom’s energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of

fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. He got out his worldly wealth and examined it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of WORK, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returned his straitened means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.

He took up his brush and went tranquilly to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben’s gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was personating a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance—for he was personating the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them:

“Stop her, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling!” The headway ran almost out, and he drew up slowly toward the sidewalk.

“Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling!” His arms straightened and stiffened down his sides.

“Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! ch-chow-wow! Chow!” His right hand, meantime, describing stately circles—for it was representing a forty-foot wheel.

“Let her go back on the labboard! Ting-a-lingling! Chow-ch-chow-chow!” The left hand began to describe circles.

“Stop the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Stop the labboard! Come ahead on the stabboard! Stop her! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow-ow-ow! Get out that head-line! LIVELY now! Come—out with your spring-line—what’re you about there! Take a turn round that stump with the bight of it! Stand by that stage, now—let her go! Done with the engines, sir! Ting-a-ling-ling! SH’T! S’H’T! SH’T!” (trying the gauge-cocks).”

Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: “Hi-Y!! YOU’RE up a stump, ain’t you!”

No answer. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result, as before. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom’s mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work. Ben said:

“Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?”

Tom wheeled suddenly and said:

“Why, it’s you, Ben! I warn’t noticing.”

“Say—I’m going in a-swimming, I am. Don’t you wish you could? But of course you’d druther WORK—wouldn’t you? Course you would!”

Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said:

“What do you call work?”

“Why, ain’t THAT work?”

Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly:

“Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain’t. All I know, is, it suits Tom Sawyer.”

“Oh come, now, you don’t mean to let on that you LIKE it?”

The brush continued to move.

“Like it? Well, I don’t see why I oughtn’t to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?”

That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticised the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said:

“Say, Tom, let ME whitewash a little.”

Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind:

“No—no—I reckon it wouldn’t hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly’s awful particular about this fence—right here on the street, you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn’t mind and SHE wouldn’t. Yes, she’s awful particular about this fence; it’s got to be done very careful; I reckon there ain’t one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it’s got to be done.”

“No—is that so? Oh come, now—lemme just try. Only just a little—I’d let YOU, if you was me, Tom.”

“Ben, I’d like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn’t let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn’t let Sid. Now don’t you see how I’m fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it—”

“Oh, shucks, I’ll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I’ll give you the core of my apple.”

“Well, here—No, Ben, now don’t. I’m afeard—”

“I’ll give you ALL of it!”

Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but alacrity in his heart. And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was fagged out, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with—and so on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn’t unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.

He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn’t run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.

Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. If he had been a great and wise philosopher, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is OBLIGED to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing artificial flowers or performing on a treadmill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only amusement. There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line, in the summer, because the privilege costs them considerable money; but if they were offered wages for the service, that would turn it into work and then they would resign.

The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report.

L’Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1962. (1962)

**Cooper, Susan. *The Dark Is Rising*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 1973. (1973)
From “Midwinter Day”**

He was woken by music. It beckoned him, lilting and insistent; delicate music, played by delicate instruments that he could not identify, with one rippling, bell-like phrase running through it in a gold thread of delight. There was in this music so much of the deepest enchantment of all his dreams and imaginings that he woke smiling in pure happiness at the sound. In the moment of his waking, it began to fade, beckoning as it went, and then as he opened his eyes it was gone. He had only the memory of that one rippling phrase still echoing in his head, and itself fading so fast that he sat up abruptly in bed and reached his arm out to the air, as if he could bring it back.

The room was very still, and there was no music, and yet Will knew that it had not been a dream.

He was in the twins’ room still; he could hear Robin’s breathing, slow and deep, from the other bed. Cold light glimmered round the edge of the curtains, but no one was stirring anywhere; it was very early. Will pulled on his rumpled clothes from the day before, and slipped out of the room. He crossed the landing to the central window, and looked down.

In the first shining moment he saw the whole strange-familial world, glistening white; the roofs of the outbuildings mounded into square towers of snow, and beyond them all the fields and hedge: buried, merged into one great flat expanse, unbroken white to the horizon's brim. Will drew in a long, happy breath, silently rejoicing. Then, very faintly, he heard the music again, the same phrase. He swung round vainly searching for it in the air, as if he might see it somewhere like a flickering light.

"Where are you?"

**Yep, Laurence. *Dragonwings*. New York: HarperCollins, 1975. (1975)
From Chapter IX: "The Dragon Wakes (December, 1905—April, 1906)"**

By the time the winter rains came to the city, we were not becoming rich, but we were doing well. Each day we put a little money away in our cold tin can. Father never said anything, but I knew he was thinking about the day when we might be able to afford to bring Mother over. You see, it was not simply a matter of paying her passage over on the boat. Father would probably have to go over after her and escort her across. There had to be money for bribes—tea money, Uncle called it—at both ends of the ocean. Now that we no longer belonged to the Company, we somehow had to acquire a thousand dollars worth of property, a faraway figure when you can only save nickels and dimes.

And yet the hope that we could start our own little fix-it shop and qualify as merchants steadily grew with the collection of coins in the tin can. I was happy most of the time, even when it became the time for the New Year by the Tang people's reckoning. [...]

We took the old picture of the Stove King and smeared some honey on it before we burned it in the stove. Later that evening we would hang up a new picture of the Stove King that we had bought in the Tang people's town. That was a sign the Stove King had returned to his place above our stove. After we had finished burning the old picture, we sat down to a lunch of meat pastries and dumplings.

**Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. New York: Phyllis Fogelman Books, 1976. (1976)
From Chapter 9**

"You were born blessed, boy, with land of your own. If you hadn't been, you'd cry out for it while you try to survive... like Mr. Lanier and Mr. Avery. Maybe even do what they doing now. It's hard on a man to give up, but sometimes it seems there just ain't nothing else he can do."

"I... I'm sorry, Papa," Stacey muttered.

After a moment, Papa reached out and draped his arm over Stacey's shoulder.

"Papa," I said, standing to join them, "we giving up too?"

Papa looked down at me and brought me closer, then waved his hand toward the drive. "You see that fig tree over yonder, Cassie? Them other trees all around... that oak and walnut, they're a lot bigger and they take up more room and give so much shade they almost overshadow that little ole fig. But that fig tree's got roots that run deep, and it belongs in that yard as much as that oak and walnut. It keeps blooming, bearing fruit year after year, knowing all the time it'll never get as big as them other trees. Just keeps on growing and doing what it gotta do. It don't give up. It give up, it'll die. There's a lesson to be learned from that little tree, Cassie girl, 'cause we're like it. We keep doing what we gotta do, and we don't give up. We can't."

Hamilton, Virginia. "The People Could Fly." *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales*. New York: Knopf Books for Young Readers, 1985. (1985)

They say the people could fly. Say that long ago in Africa, some of the people knew magic. And they would walk up on the air like climbin up on a gate. And they flew like blackbirds over the fields. Black, shiny wings flappin against the blue up there.

Then, many of the people were captured for Slavery. The ones that could fly shed their wings. They couldn't take their wings across the water on slave ships. Too crowded, don't you know.

The folks were full of misery, then. Got sick with the up and down of the sea. So they forgot about flyin when they could no longer breathe the sweet scent of Africa.

Say the people who could fly kept their power, although they shed their wings. They looked the same as the other people from Africa who had been coming over, who had dark skin. Say you couldn't tell anymore one who could fly from one who couldn't.

One such who could was an old man, call him Toby. And standin tall, yet afraid, was a young woman who once had wings. Call her Sarah. Now Sarah carried a babe tied to her back. She trembled to be so hard worked and scorned.

The slaves labored in the fields from sunup to sundown. The owner of the slaves callin himself their Master. Say he was a hard lump of clay. A hard, glinty coal. A hard rock pile, wouldn't be moved. His Overseer on horseback pointed out the slaves who were slowin down. So the one called Driver cracked his whip over the slow ones to make them move faster. That whip was a slice-open cut of pain. So they did move faster. Had to.

Paterson, Katherine. *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks*. Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. New York: Lodestar Books, 1990. (1990)

Long ago and far away in the Land of the Rising Sun, there lived together a pair of mandarin ducks. Now, the drake was a magnificent bird with plumage of colors so rich that the emperor himself would have envied it. But his mate, the duck, wore the quiet tones of the wood, blending exactly with the hole in the tree where the two had made their nest.

One day while the duck was sitting on her eggs, the drake flew down to a nearby pond to search for food. While he was there, a hunting party entered the woods. The hunters were led by the lord of the district, a proud and cruel man who believed that everything in the district belonged to him to do with as he chose. The lord was always looking for beautiful things to adorn his manor house and garden. And when he saw the drake swimming gracefully on the surface of the pond, he determined to capture him.

The lord's chief steward, a man named Shozo, tried to discourage his master. "The drake is a wild spirit, my lord," he said. "Surely he will die in captivity." But the lord pretended not to hear Shozo. Secretly he despised Shozo, because although Shozo had once been his mightiest samurai, the warrior had lost an eye in battle and was no longer handsome to look upon.

The lord ordered his servants to clear a narrow way through the undergrowth and place acorns along the path. When the drake came out of the water he saw the acorns. How pleased he was! He forgot to be cautious, thinking only of what a feast they would be to take home to his mate.

Just as he was bending to pick up an acorn in his scarlet beak, a net fell over him, and the frightened bird was carried back to the lord's manor and placed in a small bamboo cage.

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Cisneros, Sandra. "Eleven." *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*. New York: Random House, 1991. (1991)

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are — underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five.

And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

**Sutcliff, Rosemary. *Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1993. (1993)
From "The Golden Apple"**

In the high and far-off days when men were heroes and walked with the gods, Peleus, king of the Myrmidons, took for his wife a sea nymph called Thetis, Thetis of the Silver Feet. Many guests came to their wedding feast, and among the mortal guests came all the gods of high Olympus.

But as they sat feasting, one who had not been invited was suddenly in their midst: Eris, the goddess of discord, had been left out because wherever she went she took trouble with her; yet here she was, all the same, and in her blackest mood, to avenge the insult.

All she did—it seemed a small thing—was to toss down on the table a golden apple. Then she breathed upon the guests once, and vanished.

The apple lay gleaming among the piled fruits and the brimming wine cups; and bending close to look at it, everyone could see the words “To the fairest” traced on its side.

Then the three greatest of the goddesses each claimed that it was hers. Hera claimed it as wife to Zeus, the All-father, and queen of all the gods. Athene claimed that she had the better right, for the beauty of wisdom such as hers surpassed all else. Aphrodite only smiled, and asked who had a better claim to beauty’s prize than the goddess of beauty herself.

They fell to arguing among themselves; the argument became a quarrel, and the quarrel grew more and more bitter, and each called upon the assembled guests to judge between them. But the other guests refused, for they knew well enough that, whichever goddess they chose to receive the golden apple, they would make enemies of the other two.

Drama

Fletcher, Louise. *Sorry, Wrong Number*. New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1948. (1948)

[SCENE: As curtain rises, we see a divided stage, only the center part of which is lighted and furnished as MRS. STEVENSON’S bedroom. Expensive, rather fussy furnishings. A large bed, on which MRS. STEVENSON, clad in bed-jacket, is lying. A night-table close by, with phone, lighted lamp, and pill bottles. A mantle, with clock, R. A closed door. R. A window, with curtains closed, rear. The set is lit by one lamp on night-table. It is enclosed by three flats. Beyond this central set, the stage, on either side, is in darkness.]

MRS. STEVENSON is dialing a number on the phone, as curtain rises. She listens to phone, slams down receiver in irritation. As she does so, we hear sound of a train roaring by in the distance. She reaches for her pill bottle, pours herself a glass of water, shakes out pill, swallows it, then reaches for the phone again, dials number nervously.]

SOUND: Number being dialed on phone: Busy signal.

MRS. STEVENSON. (A querulous, self-centered neurotic.) Oh—dear! (Slams down receiver, Dials OPERATOR.)

[Scene: A spotlight, L. of side flat, picks up out of peripheral darkness, figure of 1st OPERATOR, sitting with headphones at a small table. If spotlight not available, use flashlight, clicked on by 1st OPERATOR, illuminating her face.]

OPERATOR. Your call, please?

MRS. STEVENSON. Operator? I’ve been dialing Murray Hill 4-0098 now for the last three-quarters of an hour, and the line is always busy. But I don’t see how it could be that busy that long. Will you try it for me please?

OPERATOR. Murray Hill 4-0098? One moment, please.

[SCENE: She makes gesture of plugging in call through switchboard.]

MRS. STEVENSON. I don’t see how it could be busy all this time. It’s my husband’s office. He’s working late tonight, and I’m all alone.

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Goodrich, Frances and Albert Hackett. *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play*. New York: Random House, 1956. (1956)

Poetry

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. "Paul Revere's Ride." (1861)

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country-folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.
Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.
Then he climbed to the tower of the church,
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
Up the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,

Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,

From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again

Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

Media Text

“*The Midnight Ride*,” an extensive resource, including audio, images, and maps, provided by the Paul Revere Memorial Association:

<http://www.paulreverehouse.org/ride/>

Whitman, Walt. “O Captain! My Captain!” *Leaves of Grass*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. (1865)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring:
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills;
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding;
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head;
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object won;

Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

**Carroll, Lewis. “Jabberwocky.” *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick, 2005. (1872)
From Chapter 1: “Looking-Glass House”**

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

'Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!

Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

'And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Navajo tradition. "Twelfth Song of Thunder." *The Mountain Chant: A Navajo Ceremony*. Forgotten Books, 2008. (1887)

The voice that beautifies the land!
The voice above,
The voice of thunder
Within the dark cloud
Again and again it sounds,
The voice that beautifies the land.

The voice that beautifies the land!
The voice below,
The voice of the grasshopper
Among the plants
Again and again it sounds,
The voice that beautifies the land.

Dickinson, Emily. "The Railway Train." *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1960. (1893)

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop—docile and omnipotent—
At its own stable door.

Yeats, William Butler. "The Song of Wandering Aengus." *W. B. Yeats Selected Poetry*. London: Macmillan, 1962. (1899)

I WENT out to the hazel wood,
 Because a fire was in my head,
 And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
 And hooked a berry to a thread;
 And when white moths were on the wing,
 And moth-like stars were flickering out,
 I dropped the berry in a stream
 And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor
 I went to blow the fire a-flame,
 But something rustled on the floor,
 And someone called me by my name:
 It had become a glimmering girl
 With apple blossom in her hair
 Who called me by my name and ran
 And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
 Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
 I will find out where she has gone,
 And kiss her lips and take her hands;
 And walk among long dappled grass,
 And pluck till time and times are done,
 The silver apples of the moon,
 The golden apples of the sun.

Frost, Robert. "The Road Not Taken." *The Poetry of Robert Frost: The Collected Poems*. Edited by Edward Connery Lathem. New York: Henry Holt, 1979. (1915)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
 And sorry I could not travel both
 And be one traveler, long I stood
 And looked down one as far as I could
 To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
 And having perhaps the better claim,
 Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
 Though as for that the passing there
 Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
 In leaves no step had trodden black.
 Oh, I kept the first for another day!
 Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
 I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
 Somewhere ages and ages hence:
 Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
 I took the one less traveled by,
 And that has made all the difference.

Sandburg, Carl. "Chicago." *Chicago Poems*. New York: Henry Holt, 1916. (1916)

Hog Butcher for the World,
 Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
 Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
 Stormy, husky, brawling,
 City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted
 women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen
the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and
children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city,
and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive
and coarse and strong and cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold
slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted
against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs
the heart of the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked,
sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

Hughes, Langston. "I, Too, Sing America." *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. New York: Knopf, 1994. (1925)

Neruda, Pablo. "The Book of Questions." *The Book of Questions*. Translated by William O'Daly. Port Townsend, Wash.: Copper Canyon Press, 1991. (1973)

Soto, Gary. "Oranges." *Black Hair*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985. (1985)

Giovanni, Nikki. "A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long." *Acolytes*. New York: William Morrow, 2007. (2007)

A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long
(You never know what troubled little girl needs a book)

At a time when there was not tv before 3:00 P.M.
And on Sunday none until 5:00
We sat on the front porches watching
The jfg sign go on and off greeting
The neighbors, discussion the political
Situation congratulating the preacher
On his sermon
There was always the radio which brought us
Songs from wlac in nashville and what we would now call
Easy listening or smooth jazz but when I listened
Late at night with my portable (that I was so proud of)
Tucked under my pillow
I heard nat king cole and matt dennis, june christy and ella fitzgerald
And sometimes sarah vaughan sing black coffee
Which I now drink
It was just called music

There was a bookstore uptown on gay street
Which I visited and inhaled that wonderful odor
Of new books
Even today I read hardcover as a preference paperback only
As a last resort

And up the hill on vine street

(The main black corridor) sat our carnegie library
 Mrs. Long always glad to see you
 The stereoscope always ready to show you faraway
 Places to dream about

Mrs. Long asking what are you looking for today
 When I wanted Leaves of Grass or alfred north whitehead
 She would go to the big library uptown and I now know
 Hat in hand to ask to borrow so that I might borrow

Probably they said something humiliating since southern
 Whites like to humiliate southern blacks

But she nonetheless brought the books
 Back and I held them to my chest
 Close to my heart
 And happily skipped back to grandmother's house
 Where I would sit on the front porch
 In a gray glider and dream of a world
 Far away

I love the world where I was
 I was safe and warm and grandmother gave me neck kissed
 When I was on my way to bed

But there was a world
 Somewhere
 Out there
 And Mrs. Long opened that wardrobe
 But no lions or witches scared me
 I went through
 Knowing there would be
 Spring

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Sample Performance Tasks for Stories, Drama, and Poetry

- Students *summarize the development* of the morality of Tom Sawyer in Mark Twain's novel of the same name and analyze its connection to themes of accountability and authenticity by noting how it is conveyed *through characters, setting, and plot*. [RL.8.2]
- Students *compare and contrast* Laurence Yep's *fictional portrayal* of Chinese immigrants in turn-of-the-twentieth-century San Francisco in *Dragonwings* to *historical accounts of the same period* (using materials detailing the 1906 San Francisco earthquake) in order to glean a deeper *understanding of how authors use or alter historical sources* to create a sense of *time and place* as well as make fictional *characters* lifelike and real. [RL.7.9]
- Students *cite explicit textual evidence* as well as draw *inferences* about the drake and the duck from Katherine Paterson's *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks* to support their *analysis* of the perils of vanity. [RL.6.1]
- Students *explain how* Sandra Cisneros's choice of words *develops the point of view of the young speaker* in her story "Eleven." [RL.6.6]
- Students *analyze* how the playwright Louise Fletcher uses *particular elements of drama* (e.g., setting and dialogue) to create dramatic tension in her play *Sorry, Wrong Number*. [RL.7.3]
- Students *compare and contrast* the effect Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *poem* "Paul Revere's Ride" has on them to the effect they experience from a *multimedia* dramatization of the event presented in an interactive digital map (<http://www.paulreverehouse.org/ride/>), *analyzing* the impact of different *techniques* employed that are *unique to each medium*. [RL.6.7]

- Students *analyze* Walt Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!” to uncover the poem’s *analogies* and *allusions*. They *analyze the impact of specific word choices* by Whitman, such as *rack* and *grim*, and *determine* how they contribute to the overall *meaning and tone* of the poem. [RL.8.4]
- Students *analyze how* the opening *stanza* of Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken” *structures* the rhythm and meter for the poem and how the *themes* introduced by the speaker *develop* over the course of *the text*. [RL.6.5]

Informational Texts: English Language Arts

**Adams, John. “Letter on Thomas Jefferson.” *Adams on Adams*. Edited by Paul M. Zall. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004. (1776)
From Chapter 6: “Declaring Independence 1775-1776”**

Mr. Jefferson came into Congress, in June, 1775, and brought with him a reputation for literature, science, science, and a happy talent of composition. Writings of his were handed about, remarkable for the peculiar felicity of expression. Though a silent member in Congress, he was so prompt, frank, explicit, and decisive upon committees and in conversation, not even Samuel Adams was more so, that he soon seized upon my heart; and upon this occasion I gave him my vote, and did all in my power to procure the votes of others. I think he had one more vote than any other, and that placed him at the head of the committee. I had the next highest number, and that placed me second. The committee met, discussed the subject, and then appointed Mr. Jefferson and me to make the draught, I suppose because we were the two first on the list.

The subcommittee met. Jefferson proposed to me to make the draft. I said, ‘I will not.’

‘You should do it.’

‘Oh! no.’

‘Why will you not? You ought to do it.’

‘I will not.’

‘Why?’

‘Reasons enough.’

‘What can be your reasons?’

‘Reason first, you are a Virginian, and a Virginian ought to appear at the head of this business. Reason second, I am obnoxious, suspected, and unpopular. You are very much otherwise. Reason third, you can write ten times better than I can.’

‘Well,’ said Jefferson, ‘if you are decided, I will do as well as I can.’

‘Very well. When you have drawn it up, we will have a meeting.’

Media Text

Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive, hosted by the Massachusetts Historical Society, includes transcriptions of letters between John and Abigail Adams as well as John Adams’s diary and autobiography: <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/aea/index.html>

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave, Written by Himself*. Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845. (1845)

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent of errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my

return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them; but prudence forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offence to teach slaves to read in this Christian country. It is enough to say of the dear little fellows, that they lived on Philpot Street, very near Durgin and Bailey’s ship-yard. I used to talk this matter of slavery over with them. I would sometimes say to them, I wished I could be as free as they would be when they got to be men. “You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, but I am a slave for life! Have not I as good a right to be free as you have?” These words used to trouble them; they would express for me the liveliest sympathy, and console me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free.

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being a slave for life began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled “The Columbian Orator.” Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan’s mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a bold denunciation of slavery, and a powerful vindication of human rights. The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Any thing, no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

**Churchill, Winston. “Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: Address to Parliament on May 13th, 1940.” *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History, 3rd Edition*. Edited by William Safire. New York: W. W. Norton, 2004. (1940)
From “Winston Churchill Braces Britons to Their Task”**

I say to the House as I said to ministers who have joined this government, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many months of struggle and suffering.

You ask, what is our policy? I say it is to wage war by land, sea, and air. War with all our might and with all the strength God has given us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.

You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory. Victory at all costs - Victory in spite of all terrors - Victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival.

I take up my task in buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. I feel entitled at this juncture, at this time, to claim the aid of all and to say, “Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength.”

**Petry, Ann. *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*. New York: HarperCollins, 1983. (1955)
From Chapter 3: “Six Years Old”**

By the time Harriet Ross was six years old, she had unconsciously absorbed many kinds of knowledge, almost with the air she breathed. She could not, for example, have said how or at what moment she knew that she was a slave.

She knew that her brothers and sisters, her father and mother, and all the other people who lived in the quarter, men, women and children were slaves.

She had been taught to say, “Yes, Missus,” “No, Missus,” to white women, “Yes, Mas’r,” “No, Mas’r” to white men. Or, “Yes, sah,” “No, sah.”

At the same time someone had taught her where to look for the North Star, the star that stayed constant, not rising in the east and setting in the west as the other stars appeared to do; and told her that anyone walking toward the North could use that star as a guide.

She knew about fear, too. Sometimes at night, or during the day, she heard the furious galloping of horses, not just one horse, several horses, thud of the hoofbeats along the road, jingle of harness. She saw the grown folks freeze into stillness, not moving, scarcely breathing, while they listened. She could not remember who first told her that those furious hoofbeats meant that patrollers were going in pursuit of a runaway. Only the slaves said patterollers, whispering the word.

**Steinbeck, John. *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*. New York: Penguin, 1997. (1962)
From pages 27–28**

I soon discovered that if a wayfaring stranger wishes to eavesdrop on a local population the places for him to slip in and hold his peace are bars and churches. But some New England towns don’t have bars, and church is only on Sunday. A good alternative is the roadside restaurant where men gather for breakfast before going to work or going hunting. To find these places inhabited one must get up very early. And there is a drawback even to this. Early-rising men not only do not talk much to strangers, they barely talk to one another. Breakfast conversation is limited to a series of laconic grunts. The natural New England taciturnity reaches its glorious perfection at breakfast.

[...]

I am not normally a breakfast eater, but here I had to be or I wouldn’t see anybody unless I stopped for gas. At the first lighted roadside restaurant I pulled in and took my seat at a counter. The customers were folded over their coffee cups like ferns. A normal conversation is as follows:

WAITRESS: “Same?”

CUSTOMER: “Yep.”

WAITRESS: “Cold enough for you?”

CUSTOMER: “Yep.”

(Ten minutes.)

WAITRESS: “Refill?”

CUSTOMER: “Yep.”

This is a really talkative customer.

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: English Language Arts

- Students *determine* the *point of view* of John Adams in his “Letter on Thomas Jefferson” and *analyze how* he *distinguishes* his position *from* an alternative approach articulated by Thomas Jefferson. [RI.7.6]

- Students *provide an objective summary* of Frederick Douglass’s Narrative. They *analyze* how *the central idea* regarding the evils of slavery is *conveyed through supporting ideas* and *developed over the course of the text*. [RI.8.2]
- Students *trace* the line of *argument* in Winston Churchill’s “Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat” address to Parliament and *evaluate* his *specific claims* and opinions *in the text*, *distinguishing* which *claims* are *supported by facts, reasons, and evidence*, and which *are not*. [RI.6.8]
- Students *analyze in detail* how the early years of Harriet Tubman (as related by author Ann Petry) contributed to her later becoming a conductor on the Underground Railroad, attending to how the author *introduces, illustrates, and elaborates* upon the events in Tubman’s life. [RI.6.3]
- Students *determine* the *figurative and connotative meanings* of words such as *wayfaring, laconic, and taciturnity* as well as of *phrases* such as *hold his peace* in John Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*. They *analyze* how Steinbeck’s *specific word choices* and diction impact the *meaning and tone* of his writing and the characterization of the individuals and places he describes. [RI.7.4]

Informational Texts: History/Social Studies

United States. Preamble and First Amendment to the United States Constitution. (1787, 1791)

Preamble

We, the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America.

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Lord, Walter. *A Night to Remember*. New York: Henry Holt, 1955. (1955)

Isaacson, Phillip. *A Short Walk through the Pyramids and through the World of Art*. New York: Knopf, 1993. (1993) From Chapter 1

At Giza, a few miles north of Saqqara, sit three great pyramids, each named for the king – or Pharaoh – during whose reign it was built. No other buildings are so well known, yet the first sight of them sitting in their field is breathtaking. When you walk among them, you walk in a place made for giants. They seem too large to have been made by human beings, too perfect to have been formed by nature, and when the sun is overhead, not solid enough to be attached to the sand. In the minutes before sunrise, they are the color of faded roses, and when the last rays of the desert sun touch them, they turn to amber. But whatever the light, their broad proportions, the beauty of the limestone, and the care with which it is fitted into place create three unforgettable works of art.

What do we learn about art when we look at the pyramids?

First, when all of the things that go into a work – its components – complement one another, they create an object that has a certain spirit, and we can call that spirit harmony. The pyramids are harmonious because limestone, a warm, quiet material, is a cordial companion for a simple, logical, pleasing shape. In fact, the stone and the shape are so comfortable with each other that the pyramids seem inevitable – as though they were bound to have the form, color, and texture that they do have.

From A SHORT WALK AROUND THE PYRAMIDS & THROUGH THE WORLD OF ART by Philip M. Isaacson, copyright © 1993 by Philip M. Isaacson. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. Any additional use of this text, such as for classroom use or curriculum development, requires independent permission from Random House, Inc.

Media Text

National Geographic mini-site on the pyramids, which includes diagrams, pictures, and a time line:
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/pyramids/pyramids.html>

**Murphy, Jim. *The Great Fire*. New York: Scholastic, 1995. (1995)
 From Chapter 1: “A City Ready to Burn”**

Chicago in 1871 was a city ready to burn. The city boasted having 59,500 buildings, many of them—such as the Court-house and the Tribune Building—large and ornately decorated. The trouble was that about two-thirds of all these structures were made entirely of wood. Many of the remaining buildings (even the ones proclaimed to be “fireproof”) looked solid, but were actually jerrybuilt affairs; the stone or brick exteriors hid wooden frames and floors, all topped with highly flammable tar or shingle roofs. It was also a common practice to disguise wood as another kind of building material. The fancy exterior decorations on just about every building were carved from wood, then painted to look like stone or marble. Most churches had steeples that appeared to be solid from the street, but a closer inspection would reveal a wooden framework covered with cleverly painted copper or tin.

The situation was worst in the middle-class and poorer districts. Lot sizes were small, and owners usually filled them up with cottages, barns, sheds, and outhouses—all made of fast-burning wood, naturally. Because both Patrick and Catherine O’Leary worked, they were able to put a large addition on their cottage despite a lot size of just 25 by 100 feet. Interspersed in these residential areas were a variety of businesses—paint factories, lumberyards, distilleries, gasworks, mills, furniture manufacturers, warehouses, and coal distributors.

Wealthier districts were by no means free of fire hazards. Stately stone and brick homes had wood interiors, and stood side by side with smaller wood-frame houses. Wooden stables and other storage buildings were common, and trees lined the streets and filled the yards.

Media Text

The Great Chicago Fire, an exhibit created by the Chicago Historical Society that includes essays and images:
<http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/intro/gcf-index.html>

**Greenberg, Jan, and Sandra Jordan. *Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist*. New York: Random House, 2001. (2001)
 From Chapter 1: “A Brabant Boy 1853–75”**

I have nature and art and poetry, if that is not enough what is?
 —Letter to Theo, January 1874

On March 30, 1853, the handsome, soberly dressed Reverend Theodorus van Gogh entered the ancient town hall of Groot-Zundert, in the Brabant, a province of the Netherlands. He opened the birth register to number twenty-nine, where exactly one year earlier he had sadly written “Vincent Willem van Gogh, stillborn.” Beside the inscription he wrote again “Vincent Willem van Gogh,” the name of his new, healthy son, who was sleeping soundly next to his mother in the tiny parsonage across the square. The baby’s arrival was an answered prayer for the still-grieving family.

The first Vincent lay buried in a tiny grave by the door of the church where Pastor van Gogh preached. The Vincent who lived grew to be a sturdy redheaded boy. Every Sunday on his way to church, young Vincent would pass the headstone carved with the name he shared. Did he feel as if his dead brother were the rightful Vincent, the one who would remain perfect in his parents’ hearts, and that he was merely an unsatisfactory replacement? That might have been one of the reasons he spent so much of his life feeling like a lonely outsider, as if he didn’t fit anywhere in the world.

Despite his dramatic beginning, Vincent had an ordinary childhood, giving no hint of the painter he would become. The small parsonage, with an upstairs just two windows wide under a slanting roof, quickly grew crowded. By the time he was six he had two sisters, Anna and Elizabeth, and one brother, Theo, whose gentle nature made him their mother’s favorite.

Media Text

The Van Gogh Gallery, a commercial Web resource with links to Van Gogh’s art and information about his life:
<http://www.vangoghgallery.com/>

**Partridge, Elizabeth. *This Land Was Made for You and Me: The Life and Songs of Woody Guthrie*. New York: Viking, 2002. (2002)
 From the Preface: “Ramblin ’Round”**

“I hate a song that makes you think that you’re not any good. I hate a song that makes you think you are just born to lose. I am out to fight those kind of songs to my very last breath of air and my last drop of blood.”

Woody Guthrie could never cure himself of wandering off. One minute he'd be there, the next he'd be gone, vanishing without a word to anyone, abandoning those he loved best. He'd throw on a few extra shirts, one on top of the other, sling his guitar over his shoulder, and hit the road. He'd stick out his thumb and hitchhike, swing onto moving freight trains, and hunker down with other traveling men in flophouses, hobo jungles, and Hoovervilles across Depression America.

He moved restlessly from state to state, soaking up some songs: work songs, mountain and cowboy songs, sea chanteys, songs from the southern chain gangs. He added them to the dozens he already knew from his childhood until he was bursting with American folk songs. Playing the guitar and singing, he started making up new ones: hard-bitten, rough-edged songs that told it like it was, full of anger and hardship and hope and love. Woody said the best songs came to him when he was walking down a road. He always had fifteen or twenty songs running around in his mind, just waiting to be put together. Sometimes he knew the words, but not the melody. Usually he'd borrow a tune that was already well known—the simpler the better. As he walked along, he tried to catch a good, easy song that people could sing the first time they heard it, remember, and sing again later.

**Monk, Linda R. *Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. New York: Hyperion, 2003. (2003)
From “We the People ...”**

The first three words of the Constitution are the most important. They clearly state that the people—not the king, not the legislature, not the courts—are the true rulers in American government. This principle is known as popular sovereignty.

But who are “We the People”? This question troubled the nation for centuries. As Lucy Stone, one of America's first advocates for women's rights, asked in 1853, “‘We the People’? Which ‘We the People’? The women were not included.” Neither were white males who did not own property, American Indians, or African Americans—slave or free. Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first African American on the Supreme Court, described the limitation:

For a sense of the evolving nature of the Constitution, we need look no further than the first three words of the document's preamble: ‘We the People.’ When the Founding Fathers used this phrase in 1787, they did not have in mind the majority of America's citizens . . . The men who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 could not . . . have imagined, nor would they have accepted, that the document they were drafting would one day be construed by a Supreme court to which had been appointed a woman and the descendant of an African slave.

Through the Amendment process, more and more Americans were eventually included in the Constitution's definition of “We the People.” After the Civil War, the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment gave African Americans citizenship, and the Fifteenth Amendment gave black men the vote. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote nationwide, and in 1971, the Twenty-sixth Amendment extended suffrage to eighteen-year-olds.

**Freedman, Russell. *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. New York: Holiday House, 2006. (2006)
From the Introduction: “Why They Walked”**

Not so long ago in Montgomery, Alabama, the color of your skin determined where you could sit on a public bus. If you happened to be an African American, you had to sit in the back of the bus, even if there were empty seats up front.

Back then, racial segregation was the rule throughout the American South. Strict laws—called “Jim Crow” laws—enforced a system of white supremacy that discriminated against blacks and kept them in their place as second-class citizens.

People were separated by race from the moment they were born in segregated hospitals until the day they were buried in segregated cemeteries. Blacks and whites did not attend the same schools, worship in the same churches, eat in the same restaurants, sleep in the same hotels, drink from the same water fountains, or sit together in the same movie theaters.

In Montgomery, it was against the law for a white person and a Negro to play checkers on public property or ride together in a taxi.

Most southern blacks were denied their right to vote. The biggest obstacle was the poll tax, a special tax that was required of all voters but was too costly for many blacks and for poor whites as well. Voters also had to pass a literacy test to prove that they could read, write, and understand the U.S. Constitution. These tests were often rigged to disqualify even highly educated blacks. Those who overcame the obstacles and insisted on registering as voters faced threats, harassment. And even physical violence. As a result, African Americans in the South could not express their grievances in the voting booth, which for the most part, was closed to them. But there were other ways to protest,

and one day a half century ago, the black citizens in Montgomery rose up in protest and united to demand their rights—by walking peacefully.

It all started on a bus.

Informational Texts: Science, Mathematics, and Technical Subjects

**Macaulay, David. *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973. (1973)
From pages 51–56**

In order to construct the vaulted ceiling a wooden scaffold was erected connecting the two walls of the choir one hundred and thirty feet above ground. On the scaffolding wooden centerings like those used for the flying buttresses were installed. They would support the arched stone ribs until the mortar was dry, at which times the ribs could support themselves. The ribs carried the webbing, which was the ceiling itself. The vaults were constructed one bay at a time, a bay being the rectangular area between four piers.

One by one, the cut stones of the ribs, called voussoirs, were hoisted onto the centering and mortared into place by the masons. Finally the keystone was lowered into place to lock the ribs together at the crown, the highest point of the arch.

The carpenters then installed pieces of wood, called lagging, that spanned the space between two centerings. On top of the lagging the masons laid one course or layer of webbing stones. The lagging supported the course of webbing until the mortar was dry. The webbing was constructed of the lightest possible stone to lessen the weight on the ribs. Two teams, each with a mason and a carpenter, worked simultaneously from both sides of the vault – installing first the lagging, then the webbing. When they met in the center the vault was complete. The vaulting over the aisle was constructed in the same way and at the same time.

When the mortar in the webbing had set, a four-inch layer of concrete was poured over the entire vault to prevent any cracking between the stones. Once the concrete had set, the lagging was removed and the centering was lowered and moved onto the scaffolding of the next bay. The procedure was repeated until eventually the entire choir was vaulted.

Mackay, Donald. *The Building of Manhattan*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987. (1987)

Media Text

Manhattan on the Web: History, a Web portal hosted by the New York Public Library:
<http://legacy.www.nypl.org/branch/manhattan/index2.cfm?Trq=1&d1=865>

**Enzensberger, Hans Magnus. *The Number Devil: A Mathematical Adventure*. Illustrated by Rotraut Susanne Berner. Translated by Michael Henry Heim. New York: Henry Holt, 1998. (1998)
From “The First Night”**

... “I see,” said the number devil with a wry smile. “I have nothing against your Mr. Bockel, but that kind of problem has nothing whatever to do with what I’m interested in. Do you want to know something? Most genuine mathematicians are bad at sums. Besides, they have no time to waste on them. That’s what pocket calculators are for. I assume you have one.

“Sure, but we’re not allowed to use them in school.”

“I see,” said the number devil. “That’s all right. There’s nothing wrong with a little addition and subtraction. You never know when your battery will die on you. But mathematics, my boy, that’s something else again!” . . .

... “The thing that makes numbers so devilish is precisely that they are simple. And you don’t need a calculator to prove it. You need one thing and one thing only: one. With one—I am speaking of the numeral of course—you can do almost anything. If you are afraid of large numbers—let’s say five million seven hundred and twenty-three thousand eight hundred and twelve—all you have to do is start with

1 + 1
 1+1+1
 1+1+1+1
 1+1+1+1+1

... and go on until you come to five million etcetera. You can't tell me that's too complicated for you, can you?

**Peterson, Ivars and Nancy Henderson. *Math Trek: Adventures in the Math Zone*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. (2000)
 From "Trek 7, The Fractal Pond Race"**

From the meanderings of a pond's edge to the branching of trees and the intricate forms of snowflakes, shapes in nature are often more complicated than geometrical shapes such as circles, spheres, angles, cones, rectangles, and cubes. Benoit Mandelbrot, a mathematics professor at Yale University and an IBM fellow, was the first person to recognize how amazingly common this type of structure is in nature. In 1975, he coined the term fractal for shapes that repeat themselves within an object. The word fractal comes from the Latin term for "broken."

In 1904, long before Mandelbrot conceived of fractals, Swedish mathematician Helge von Koch created and intriguing but puzzling curve. It zigzags in such an odd pattern that it seems impossible to start at one point and follow the curve to reach another point.

Like many figures now known to be fractals, Koch's curve is easy to generate by starting with a simple figure and turning it into an increasingly crinkly form.

What to Do

1. Draw an equilateral triangle with each side measuring 9 centimeters. (Remember, each angle of an equilateral triangle measures 60° .)
2. Divide each 9-centimeter side into three parts, each measuring three centimeters. At the middle of each side, add an equilateral triangle one third the size of the original, facing outward. Because each side of the original triangle is 9 centimeters, the new triangles will have 3-centimeter sides. When you examine the outer edge of your diagram you should see a six-pointed star made up of 12 line segments.
3. At the middle of each segment of the star, add a triangle one ninth the side of the original triangle. The new triangles will have sides 1 centimeter in length so divide each 3-centimeter segment into thirds, and use the middle third to form a new triangle.
4. Going one step farther, you create a shape that begins to resemble a snowflake. If you were to continue the process by endlessly adding smaller and smaller triangles to every new side, you would produce the Koch snowflake curve. Between any two points, the snowflake would have an infinite number of zigzags.

Katz, John. *Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet out of Idaho*. New York: Broadway Books, 2001. (2001)

Jesse and Eric lived in a cave-an airless two-bedroom apartment in a dank stucco-and-brick complex on the outskirts of Caldwell. Two doors down, chickens paraded around the street.

The apartment itself was dominated by two computers that sat across from the front door like twin shrines. Everything else-the piles of dirty laundry, the opened Doritos bags, the empty cans of generic soda pop, two ratty old chairs, and a moldering beanbag chair-was dispensable, an afterthought, props.

Jesse's computer was a Pentium 11 300, Asus P2B (Intel BX chipset) motherboard; a Matrix Milleniurn II AGP; 160 MB SDRAM with a 15.5 GB total hard-drive space; a 4X CD-recorder; 24X CD-ROM; a 17-inch Micron monitor. Plus a scanner and printer. A well-thumbed paperback-Katherine Dunn's novel *Geek Love*-served as his mousepad.

Eric's computer: an AMD K-6 233 with a generic motherboard; an S3 video card, a 15-inch monitor; a 2.5 GB hard drive with 36 MB SDRAM. Jesse wangled the parts for both from work.

They stashed their bikes and then Jesse blasted in through the door, which was always left open since he can never hang on to keys, and went right to his PC, which was always on. He yelled a question to Eric about the new operating system. "We change them like cartons of milk," he explained. At the moment, he had NT 5, NT 4, Work Station, Windows 98, and he and Eric had begun fooling around with Linux, the complex, open-source software system rapidly spreading across the world.

Petroski, Henry. "The Evolution of the Grocery Bag." *American Scholar* 72.4 (Autumn 2003). (2003)

That much-reviled bottleneck known as the American supermarket checkout lane would be an even greater exercise in frustration were it not for several technological advances. The Universal Product Code and the decoding laser scanner, introduced in 1974, tally a shopper's groceries far more quickly and accurately than the old method of inputting each purchase manually into a cash register. But beeping a large order past the scanner would have led only to a faster pileup of cans and boxes down the line, where the bagger works, had it not been for the introduction, more than a century earlier, of an even greater technological masterpiece: the square-bottomed paper bag.

The geometry of paper bags continues to hold a magical appeal for those of us who are fascinated by how ordinary things are designed and made. Originally, grocery bags were created on demand by storekeepers, who cut, folded, and pasted sheets of paper, making versatile containers into which purchases could be loaded for carrying home. The first paper bags manufactured commercially are said to have been made in Bristol, England, in the 1840s. In 1852, a "Machine for Making Bags of Paper" was patented in America by Francis Wolle, of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. According to Wolle's own description of the machine's operation, "pieces of paper of suitable length are given out from a roll of the required width, cut off from the roll and otherwise suitably cut to the required shape, folded, their edges pasted and lapped, and formed into complete and perfect bags." The "perfect bags" produced at the rate of eighteen hundred per hour by Wolle's machine were, of course, not perfect, nor was his machine. The history of design has yet to see the development of a perfect object, though it has seen many satisfactory ones and many substantially improved ones. The concept of comparative improvement is embedded in the paradigm for invention, the better mousetrap. No one is ever likely to lay claim to a "best" mousetrap, for that would preclude the inventor himself from coming up with a still better mousetrap without suffering the embarrassment of having previously declared the search complete. As with the mousetrap, so with the bag.

"Geology." *U*X*L Encyclopedia of Science*. Edited by Rob Nagel. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale Cengage Learning, 2007. (2007)

Geology is the scientific study of Earth. Geologists study the planet—its formation, its internal structure, its materials, its chemical and physical processes, and its history. Mountains, valleys, plains, sea floors, minerals, rocks, fossils, and the processes that create and destroy each of these are all the domain of the geologist. Geology is divided into two broad categories of study: physical geology and historical geology.

Physical geology is concerned with the processes occurring on or below the surface of Earth and the materials on which they operate. These processes include volcanic eruptions, landslides, earthquakes, and floods. Materials include rocks, air, seawater, soils, and sediment. Physical geology further divides into more specific branches, each of which deals with its own part of Earth's materials, landforms, and processes. Mineralogy and petrology investigate the composition and origin of minerals and rocks. Volcanologists study lava, rocks, and gases on live, dormant, and extinct volcanoes. Seismologists use instruments to monitor and predict earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Historical geology is concerned with the chronology of events, both physical and biological, that have taken place in Earth's history. Paleontologists study fossils (remains of ancient life) for evidence of the evolution of life on Earth. Fossils not only relate evolution, but also speak of the environment in which the organism lived. Corals in rocks at the top of the Grand Canyon in Arizona, for example, show a shallow sea flooded the area around 290 million years ago. In addition, by determining the ages and types of rocks around the world, geologists piece together continental and oceanic history over the past few billion years. Plate tectonics (the study of the movement of the sections of Earth's crust) adds to Earth's story with details of the changing configuration of the continents and oceans.

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"Space Probe." *Astronomy & Space: From the Big Bang to the Big Crunch*. Edited by Phillis Engelbert. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009. (2009)

A space probe is an uncrewed spacecraft that leaves Earth's orbit to explore the Moon, planets, asteroids, comets, or other objects in outer space as directed by onboard computers and/or instructions sent from Earth. The purpose of such missions is to make scientific observations, such as taking pictures, measuring atmospheric conditions, and collecting soil samples, and to bring or report the data back to Earth.

Numerous space probes have been launched since the former Soviet Union first fired Luna 1 toward the Moon in 1959. Probes have now visited each of the eight planets in the solar system.

In fact, two probes—Voyager 1 and Voyager 2—are approaching the edge of the solar system, for their eventual trip into the interstellar medium. By January 2008 Voyager 1 was about 9.4 billion miles (15.2 billion kilometers) from the Sun and in May 2008 it entered the heliosheath (the boundary where the solar wind is thought to end), which is the area that roughly divides the solar system from interstellar space. Voyager 2 is not quite as far as its sister probe. Voyager 1 is expected to be the first human space probe to leave the solar system. Both Voyager probes are still transmit-

ting signals back to Earth. They are expected to help gather further information as to the true boundary of the solar system.

The earliest probes traveled to the closest extraterrestrial target, the Moon. The former Soviet Union launched a series of Luna probes that provided humans with first pictures of the far side of the Moon. In 1966, Luna 9 made the first successful landing on the Moon and sent back television footage from the Moon's surface.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) initially made several unsuccessful attempts to send a probe to the Moon. Not until 1964 did a Ranger probe reach its mark and send back thousands of pictures. Then, a few months after Luna 9, NASA landed Surveyor on the Moon.

In the meantime, NASA was moving ahead with the first series of planetary probes, called Mariner. Mariner 2 first reached the planet Venus in 1962. Later Mariner spacecrafts flew by Mars in 1964 and 1969, providing detailed images of that planet. In 1971, Mariner 9 became the first spacecraft to orbit Mars. During its year in orbit, Mariner 9's two television cameras transmitted footage of an intense Martian dust storm, as well as images of 90 percent of the planet's surface and the two Martian natural satellites (moons).

Encounters were also made with Mars in 1976 by the U.S. probes Viking 1 and Viking 2. Each Viking spacecraft consisted of both an orbiter and a lander. Viking 1 made the first successful soft landing on Mars on July 20, 1976. Soon after, Viking 2 landed on the opposite side of the planet. The Viking orbiters made reports on the Martian weather and photographed almost the entire surface of the planet.

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“Elementary Particles.” *New Book of Popular Science*. New York: Scholastic, 2010. (2010)

California Invasive Plant Council. *Invasive Plant Inventory*. <http://www.cal-ipc.org/ip/inventory/index.php>. 2006-2010. (2010)

The Inventory categorizes plants as High, Moderate, or Limited, reflecting the level of each species' negative ecological impact in California. Other factors, such as economic impact or difficulty of management, are not included in this assessment. It is important to note that even Limited species are invasive and should be of concern to land managers. Although the impact of each plant varies regionally, its rating represents cumulative impacts statewide. Therefore, a plant whose statewide impacts are categorized as Limited may have more severe impacts in a particular region. Conversely, a plant categorized as having a High cumulative impact across California may have very little impact in some regions.

The Inventory Review Committee, Cal-IPC staff, and volunteers drafted assessments for each plant based on the formal criteria system described below. The committee solicited information from land managers across the state to complement the available literature. Assessments were released for public review before the committee finalized them. The 2006 list includes 39 High species, 65 Moderate species, and 89 Limited species. Additional information, including updated observations, will be added to this website periodically, with revisions tracked and dated.

Definitions

The Inventory categorizes “invasive non-native plants that threaten wildlands” according to the definitions below. Plants were evaluated only if they invade California wildlands with native habitat values. The Inventory does not include plants found solely in areas of human-caused disturbance such as roadsides and cultivated agricultural fields.

- Wildlands are public and private lands that support native ecosystems, including some working landscapes such as grazed rangeland and active timberland.
- Non-native plants are species introduced to California after European contact and as a direct or indirect result of human activity.
- Invasive non-native plants that threaten wildlands are plants that 1) are not native to, yet can spread into, wildland ecosystems, and that also 2) displace native species, hybridize with native species, alter biological communities, or alter ecosystem processes.

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: History/Social Studies & Science, Mathematics, and Technical Subjects

- Students analyze the governmental structure of the United States and *support* their *analysis* by *citing specific textual evidence* from *primary sources* such as the Preamble and First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as well as secondary sources such as Linda R. Monk's *Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. [RH.6–8.1]
- Students evaluate Jim Murphy's *The Great Fire* to *identify* which *aspects of the text* (e.g., *loaded language* and the *inclusion of particular facts*) *reveal* his purpose; presenting Chicago as a city that was “ready to burn.” [RH.6–8.6]
- Students *describe how* Russell Freedman in his book *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott* integrates and *presents information* both *sequentially* and *causally* to explain how the civil rights movement began. [RH.6–8.5]
- Students *integrate* the *quantitative or technical information* expressed in the *text* of David Macaulay's *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction* with the information conveyed by the *diagrams* and *models* Macaulay provides, developing a deeper understanding of Gothic architecture. [RST.6–8.7]
- Students construct a holistic picture of the history of Manhattan by *comparing and contrasting the information gained from* Donald Mackay's *The Building of Manhattan* with the *multimedia sources* available on the “Manhattan on the Web” portal hosted by the New York Public Library (<http://legacy.www.nypl.org/branch/manhattan/index2.cfm?Trg=1&d1=865>). [RST.6–8.9]
- Students learn about fractal geometry by reading Ivars Peterson and Nancy Henderson's *Math Trek: Adventures in the Math Zone* and then generate their own fractal geometric structure by *following the multistep procedure* for creating a Koch's curve. [RST.6–8.3]