THE FLORIDA BENCHMARKS FOR EXCELLENT STUDENT THINKING (B.E.S.T.) STANDARDS

Parent Guide for Grade 7 English Language Arts

PREPARING FLORIDA CHILDREN FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

The B.E.S.T. Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) are literacy standards for Florida students that will shape their education and make Florida the most literate state in the nation. The B.E.S.T. Standards will pave the way for Florida students to receive a world-class education and prepare them for a successful future.

THESE STANDARDS EMPHASIZE:

- Explicit and systematic phonics instruction
- Critical thinking skills
- A deep respect for literature from historic time periods
- Knowledge building through content-rich texts

Education leaders across the state of Florida improved the academic content standards, creating new expectations for what students need to know and be able to do. These benchmarks are goals that students are expected to achieve by the end of the school year. The B.E.S.T. Standards are designed to ensure that **all** students reach their greatest potential.

Preparing your child for success begins in Kindergarten and continues as your child moves up through each grade. This guide will support parents and families with children in seventh grade by helping you:

LEARN about the B.E.S.T. Standards and why they matter for your child.

TALK with your child's teachers about what he/she will be learning in the classroom.

LOCATE activities and resources to support your child's learning in practical ways at home.

UNDERSTAND important educational (academic) words that you will see in your child's grade-level standards.

LEARN ABOUT THE SEVENTH GRADE STANDARDS

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS IN SEVENTH GRADE:

- Demonstrating an understanding of spoken words, syllables and sounds.
- Knowing and applying strategies to decode/encode (taking words apart/putting words together) multisyllabic words.
- Reading grade-level texts with accuracy, automaticity and appropriate prosody or expression.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS EXPECTATIONS:

- Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.
- Read and comprehend grade-level complex texts proficiently.
- Make inferences to support comprehension.
- Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.
- Use the accepted rules governing a specific format to create quality work.
- Use appropriate voice and tone when speaking or writing.

SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME

You can encourage learning English language arts at home in ways that are fun for you and your child. Try these ideas after school, on weekends and during the summer:

- ✓ Encourage your child to use book trailers to select a first, second and third choice to read. Ask him/her to tell you why and how each video made a book sound interesting. Go to the library to check out and read those top choices.
- ✓ Set up and carry out a family debate night on a topic that interests your child. Incorporate the principles of argument into your more informal discussions with your child.
- ✓ Encourage your student to see, understand and explain both sides of situations or conflicts.
- ✓ Find and post a family word of the week or month. Learn the word and use it in conversations with one another as well as written communication when opportunities arise.
- ✓ Be frequent visitors to your local public library. Let him/her see you choosing, checking out and enjoying books.
- ✓ Work with your child to develop a personal résumé and portfolio and practice filling out electronic applications.

SEVENTH GRADE SUGGESTED BOOK LIST



Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, November 27, 1963 by Lyndon Baines Johnson

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce

Citizenship and Leadership from The Moral Compass: Stories for a Life's Journey by William Bennett

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night by Dylan Thomas

Farewell Address by Dwight Eisenhower

Give Me Liberty or Given Me Death Speech by Patrick Henry

On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer by John Keats

On Women's Right to Vote by Susan B. Anthony

Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare the sonnet-ballad by Gwendolyn Brooks

The Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe

Book of Esther from the Bible

Freedom Walkers by Russell Freedman

George vs. George: The American Revolution as Seen from Both Sides by Rosalyn Schanzer

The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas

The Kon-Tiki Expedition: By Raft Across the South Seas by Thor Heyerdahl

The Long Road to Gettysburg by Jim Murphy

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Fredrick Douglass

The Prince and the Pauper by Mark Twain

The Red Umbrella by Christina Diaz Gonzalez

The Twenty-One Balloons by William Pène du Bois

The Yearlings by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

The Destructive Male by Phillip K. Dick

The New Colossus by Emma Lazarus

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

SUPPLEMENTAL READING OPTIONS

The Story of Doctor Dolittle by Hugh Lofting

The Neverending Story by Michael Ende

The Hound of the Baskervilles by Arthur Conan Doyle

The Call of the Wild by Jack London

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle

I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

Matilda by Roald Dahl

The Age of Fable by Thomas Bulfinch

The Hiding Place by Corrie ten Boom

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls

The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas

TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Now that your child has reached middle school, he/she should be taking on more responsibility for his/her own learning. Parent/teacher conferences may be led by your student. Look for those conferences to focus on examples of student work. Together, talk about ways this work is successful as well as possible ways your student can continue to learn and grow as a reader and effective communicator.

EDUCATIONAL (ACADEMIC) WORDS TO KNOW

ANALYZE: To study or examine something in detail in order to discover more about it.

ARGUMENT: A coherent series of reasons, statements or facts intended to support or establish a point of view.

AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE: In informational text, the author's attitude toward a topic or subject.

AUTHOR'S PURPOSE: The reason an author has for writing a text and engaging their audience; these reasons often overlap (e.g., persuade, inform, entertain).

CENTRAL IDEA: The most important or central thought unifying elements of a text.

EPIC (POEM): A long narrative poem in elevated style recounting the deeds of a legendary or historic hero.

EVALUATE: To judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount or value of something.

EXPOSITORY: Explaining or describing something.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE: Language characterized by figures of speech (e.g., metaphor, symbolism).

INFER: To form an opinion from evidence; to reach a conclusion based on known facts.

NARRATIVE: Something (as a story) that is told in full detail.

PARAPHRASE: To say something that someone else has said or written using different words.

PERSPECTIVE: A particular attitude toward or way of regarding something.

RHETORIC: The art or skill of speaking or writing formally and effectively especially as a way to persuade or influence people.

RHETORICAL APPEALS: The writing an author uses to appeal to credibility, ethics, moral principles, time, place, logic, reason and/or emotion.

SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION: A carefully thought out and planned sequence of instruction.

TEXT: Anything that conveys a set of meanings to the person who examines it.

TEXT FEATURES: The components of a story or article that are not the main body of the text, including the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions and labeled diagrams.

TEXT STRUCTURES: Structures used to organize information in a text (e.g., chronology, comparison and cause and effect).

THEME: The underlying message or big idea of a talk, book, film or other work.