

8th Grade

Learning

Guide

ELA



Note to Students and Families: The learning guides can be translated using your phone!

How to Translate the Learning Guides:

1. Download the Google Translate app
2. Tap "Camera"
3. Point your camera at the text you want to translate
4. Tap "Scan"
5. Tap "Select all"

How to Use This Learning Guide:

This learning guide contains 10 lessons. Each lesson is made up of several sections. Here is how you should move through the sections:

- **First**, you will read the **text/story**.
- **Next**, there is a section called "**What Students are Learning**" that says what you are learning and what you will be doing. It includes information about the standards that are connected to the lesson.
- **After that**, there is a section called "**Background and Context**" that gives you more information about the author (writer) or the topic (what you read about).
- **Then**, there is a section called "**Supports for Learning**" that helps you to understand the lesson better.
- **Next**, there is a section called "**Online Resources for Students**" that has videos and websites that you can visit for additional information.
 - This section is *optional*. It extends the lesson (makes the lesson longer to learn more about the topic or the author/poet), but it is not needed to complete any of the activities found in the next section, called "Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board."
- **Finally**, there is a section called "**Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board**." This tells you what work to complete.
 - The directions say that you should complete at least 2 activities from each row.
 - You should pick activities that you think are interesting and help you show what you have learned from the text/poem.

Grade: 8 Subject: English Language Arts

Topic: American Justice in the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the highest court of the United States. It was set up by our Constitution to make important decisions about the law. This article describes how the Supreme Court works, and its impact on American justice. As you read, identify the responsibilities of the Supreme Court and how it fulfills those responsibilities.



"[Inside the United States Supreme Court](#)" by Phil Roeder is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Did you ever get into an argument with someone and wish you could bring the debate to a higher power to settle it? Lawyers in the United States face the same problem, and the highest court they can take their arguments to is the Supreme Court. The Constitution¹ set up the Supreme Court to be the highest court in the land, and the head of the judicial² branch of the government. Its motto is, "Equal Justice under the Law," because it aims to interpret the Constitution and settle debates between lawyers fairly.

PEOPLE ON THE COURT

Nine judges, called Justices, work for the Supreme Court, and they all listen to every case that is presented to them. The President chooses the people that he wants to serve on the Court, and the Senate confirms or rejects each of the President's choices. Once a Justice gets confirmed, he or she will remain on the Supreme Court for life. It is a great honor to be selected to serve on the Supreme Court, because it shows that the President and the Senate trust you to interpret the Constitution fairly.

The Supreme Court has the power of judicial review. This means they have the power to determine if a law is constitutional.³ If the Justices decide the law does not line up with the Constitution, the law is **invalid** forever. It is a very difficult job, and often the Court is split 5-4 on tough decisions because everyone reads the Constitution differently.

¹ The United States Constitution is the supreme law of the United States of America, established in 1788.

² The judicial branch of the United States government is the system of courts that interprets and applies the law.

³ That is, if something is allowed by the United States constitution. If something violated the Bill of Rights, for example, it would not be constitutional

THE ROAD TO THE COURT

Not every legal case can make it to the Supreme Court. First, the case has to work its way through a series of lower state and federal courts through an **appeals** process. If one side of a case that was tried in a lower court does not like the outcome of the verdict,⁴ they can appeal to a higher court and hope the decision will be different. The appeals process is expensive and can take months or years. Second, the Supreme Court only listens to cases that have to do with federal laws, or laws that affect more than one state. Finally, the Justices get to choose which cases they want to hear. They get up to 8,000 applications every year from lawyers who want to appeal, but they only hear about 80 cases each year.

Once the Supreme Court agrees to hear a case, the lawyers on each side have to prepare arguments to present to the Justices in the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C. Each lawyer has 30 minutes to convince the Justices why his or her side is right. The Justices meet immediately after the hearing to discuss some initial thoughts, but they do not officially vote on the case until sometime later. When they do vote, the winning side – known as the majority – chooses one Justice to write the opinion of Court, a brief essay explaining why they voted the way they did. After that, the decision is final.

WHY THE COURT MATTERS

Supreme Court decisions can have a huge impact on American politics and society. For example, in 1896 the Court made a famous decision in the case *Plessy v. Ferguson*: it was fine to separate people by race in public and private areas, as long as the conditions for both races were equal. The opinion of the Court used the phrase “separate but equal,” which became a popular motto for **segregation**⁵ and **oppression**⁶ of African Americans across the country for decades to come. Fortunately, the Court made another decision in the 1954 case *Brown v. Board of Education*, which undid some of the damage. They ruled that segregation in schools was unconstitutional. These cases are just two examples of how decisions made in the Supreme Court can have massive effects on our everyday lives.

⁴ Verdict (noun) : the decision of a court of law

⁵ Segregation refers to the separation of people by race, including sending students to separate schools.

⁶ Oppression (noun) : the cruel or unfair treatment of a group of people

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What Students are Learning:

- CC.1.2.8.A – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CC.1.2.8.B – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
- CC.1.2.8.C – Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.

Background and Context for Parents and Guardians:

This informational text is an introduction to the United States Supreme Court -- who is on it, how cases are brought to the Supreme Court, and why it matters.



As students read, they will consider the themes of America and justice, freedom and equality as they relate to the text.

Students will try to answer these big questions :

- "What is fair?" and
- "What makes America unique?"

Ways to support your student:

- Word Study- Review the vocabulary words listed below with your child. Practice using these words when talking about the text.
 - Invalid (adj) not acceptable or usable in law
 - **Verdict** (noun): the decision of a court of law
 - **Appeal** (verb): to formally ask the ruling to be reviewed or reconsidered
 - **Segregation** (noun): refers to the separation of people by race, including sending students to separate schools.
 - Oppression (noun) : the cruel or unfair treatment of a group of people
 - **Mandate** (v): to require by law
- After reading, ask questions about the text. These questions could include:
 - What did you think the text was mostly about?
 - What do you think the author wanted you to know about the topic? That is an interesting point. What made you think that?
 - What did you learn about Justice, Freedom & Equality?

Online Resources for Students:

Video:

- Watch the following clips with your child at home:
 - ['Civil Rights Movement for Kids: Brown vs Board of Education \(Black History\)'](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEQ1uG4PZcA)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEQ1uG4PZcA>
 - ['Why Supreme Court Justices Serve For Life '](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGfXipCICjU)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGfXipCICjU>
 - ['SchoolHouse Rock: Three Ring Government '](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEPd98CbbMk)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEPd98CbbMk>

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Link: <https://powerlibrary.org>

When you access this link from home you will need to log in with the barcode number on your library card. If you do not have a library card, click on the link that reads: Apply for an e-card now. You will need to enter your email and zip code. You will receive a login to Powerlibrary.

Building Background Knowledge: You can review this infographic (<https://tinyurl.com/SCinfographic>) to better understand how the Supreme Court works.

Supreme Court cases where students influenced the Constitution

By Scott Bomboy

From: <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/supreme-court-cases-where-students-influenced-the-constitution>

Some of the most significant Supreme Court cases in history were controversies that were started by, or on behalf, of public school students or teenagers. Here is a brief review of eight such cases.



Compelled free speech by public schools

Two early but important Supreme Court cases defined the ability of students to not take part in some public school activities based on First Amendment religious objections. First, in the 1940 case of *Minersville School District v. Gobitis*, children Lillian Gobitas (age 12) and William Gobitas (age 10) were expelled from their Pennsylvania public school for not participating in the Pledge of Allegiance. Their father sued the school district because their family affiliation with the Jehovah's Witnesses prevented oath taking to any flag. The Court ruled for the school district in 1940 but that decision only lasted about three years, when the Justices reversed themselves in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*. Jehovah's Witnesses grade-school students Gathie (age 10) and Marie Barnett (age 8) were expelled from their public school for refusing to pledge. This time, Justice Robert Jackson, in a 6-3 decision, said the students' First Amendment rights were violated.

Segregated public schools

The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) decision actually consolidated lawsuits from four states into one case including *Briggs v. Elliott* was from South Carolina; *Davis v. County School Board* was from Virginia; and *Gebhart v. Belton* from Delaware. Oliver Brown, on behalf of his nine-year-old daughter Linda, challenged a Kansas state law that permitted public schools segregated by race. The Warren Court's unanimous decision explained that the separate-but-equal doctrine from the 1896 *Plessey* decision violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, and it ordered an end to legally mandated race-segregated schools.

Compelled religious prayers in public schools

The Schempp family, including high school students Roger and Donna Schempp, sued the Abington (Pa.) school district over its policy of including bible verses and prayers at school activities. The Schempps were Unitarians, and they sued the school, even though it allowed for written exemptions for students objecting to the practice. In *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963), Justice Fred Clark said the general practice violated the First Amendment. "While the Free Exercise Clause clearly prohibits the use of state action to deny the rights of free exercise to *anyone*, it has never meant that a majority could use the machinery of the

State to practice its beliefs,” Clark said.

Due process rights for teenagers

In 1968, the Court ruled in an 8-1 decision in the case of *In re Gault* that teens accused of crimes are entitled to the same due process rights as adults. In 1964, Jerry Gault, 15, was taken into custody for allegedly making an obscene phone call. Gault was held in custody since he was on probation for another incident and his parents weren’t initially notified. A judge then committed Gault to six years in custody for a crime that had an adult sentence of two months. Justice Abe Fortas said the juvenile detention and trial practices used by the state of Arizona widely violated due process clauses under the 14th Amendment and Fifth Amendment.

Political free speech for students

At the height of¹ the Vietnam War, Mary Beth Tinker, a 13-year-old student at Warren Harding Junior High School in Des Moines, Iowa, wore a black armband to school to protest the Vietnam War and was suspended. A few other students joined her. In the 7-2 majority opinion in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969), Justice Fortas said public school students don’t “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.” While Fortas said these rights don’t extend to conduct that “materially disrupts classwork or involves substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others,” Tinker’s silent protest was permitted under the First Amendment.

Mandatory school attendance and faith

In *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), Wisconsin mandated that all children attend public school until age 16, but members of the Old Order Amish religion and the Conservative Amish Mennonite Church refused to send their 14- and 15-year-old children to schools. They argued that the children didn’t need to be in school that long to lead a fulfilling life of farming and agricultural work, and such state-compelled laws violated their faith. The Supreme Court unanimously agreed, saying that the values of public school were in “sharp conflict with the fundamental mode of life mandated by the Amish religion.”

Student searches at school

The 1985 decision of *New Jersey v. TLO* found that public school students have some rights when it comes to school officials who want to search their person or personal belongings for evidence of wrongdoing. But those rights are very limited. In Piscataway, New Jersey, after a high school student (called “TLO” in court documents) was caught smoking cigarettes in school, she was confronted by the school’s vice principal, who forced the student to hand over her purse. The vice principal then searched her purse, found drug paraphernalia and called the police; the student was eventually charged with multiple crimes and expelled from the school. Her family argued that the evidence should not have been admissible in court because it violated T.L.O.’s Fourth Amendment protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. The Supreme Court decided students have a legitimate expectation of privacy when in school, but school officials can conduct a “reasonable” search beyond a mere hunch, based on evidence, without a warrant.

Religious student clubs at public schools

Westside High School senior Bridget Mergens in Omaha, Nebraska, asked her principal for permission to start an after-school Christian bible, prayer and study student club. The principal denied Mergens’ request, telling her that a religious club would violate the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause. In *Board of*

¹ At the height of = during the main part of

Education of Westside Community Schools v. Mergens (1990), Sandra Day O'Connor in an 8-1 decision said that since the club didn't study the school curriculum, it was permitted under the Equal Access Act, which allows student access to any similar club based on Free Speech principles. "The school has maintained a 'limited open forum' under the Act and is prohibited from discriminating, based on the content of the students' speech, against students who wish to meet on school premises during non-instructional time," O'Connor said.

Scott Bomboy is the editor in chief of the National Constitution Center.

Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board (This should be used for lessons 1 and 2):

"American Justice in the Supreme Court"

Directions: Read the text "American Justice in the Supreme Court". You can access the text above. Then, choose **4** activities from the choice board below. You should complete at least two activities from each **row**.

| | Activity 1 | Activity 2 | Activity 3 |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| R o w 1 | <p>Complete a first read of the text "American Justice in the Supreme Court"</p> <p>Write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 things that interested you about the text. • 3 questions you have about the text. | <p>Read "American Justice in the Supreme Court". Then answer the questions listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the central idea presented in the text? How did the author support this idea? • Describe the relationship between the appeals process and the Supreme Court. | <p>Word Study: Read the definitions of the vocabulary words (verdict, oppression, segregation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write two sentences using each word. • The sentences are to be grade appropriate and use at least eight words in each sentence. |
| R o w 2 | <p>Complete a second read of the text. As you read, take notes on the key ideas of the text.</p> <p>Then, write a summary of the text. Make sure that your summary includes essential details from the text. Your summary should be at least 5-7 sentences long.</p> | <p>Text dependent analysis: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>According to the text, the Supreme Court plays an important role in the United States. Write an essay analyzing how the Supreme Court has impacted U.S. history. Support your response with evidence from the text.</p> | <p>Respond to the text: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>Is it fair or just that a "higher power" -- just nine individuals -- decides who is right in an argument? What are some reasons this is fair, and some examples when it might not be? How would you alter this system to ensure justice?</p> |

Lessons Three and Four

Grade: 8 Subject: English Language Arts

Topic: An Incredible Job: Being America's President
by USHistory.org

The President of the United States is the elected commander-in-chief who has many responsibilities that are crucial to the safety and success of America. This informational text discusses the duties of the President, as well as how this office has evolved over time. As you read, identify the skills a U.S. President must have in order to be successful.



"Presidents Obama, Bush, and Clinton" by Pete Souza is in the public domain.

Just what exactly does the President do all day?

The evolving power and enlarging scope² of responsibilities have made the modern presidency a very big job. Some even say that it is impossible for one person to handle it all.

PRESIDENTS AS CRISIS MANAGERS

The Constitutional power as “Commander in Chief” has evolved into the very important modern role of “crisis manager.” In the 20th century, as the United States gained world leadership powers, the President has become a key player in international crises. In the case of war (such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War) or less famous regional conflicts (such as those in Kosovo, Somalia, or Haiti) the President must go into “emergency mode” and concentrate on the immediate problem. Domestically³, crises may occur — such as urban⁴ riots, hurricanes, or forest fires — that require the President to schedule time to coordinate government responses to the situation.

² Scope (noun) : the area, amount, or subject matter covered

³ Domestically (adv) : relating to one's own or a particular country as apart from other countries

⁴ Urban (adjective) : in, relating to, or characteristic of a city or town

PRESIDENTS AS SYMBOLS AND ADMINISTRATORS

More than anyone else, the President symbolizes the country — its people and its beliefs. In this role, a President performs many ceremonial duties, such as receiving foreign dignitaries⁵ throwing the first baseball of the season, and waving to crowds. These actions are not trivial⁶. Strong Presidents must exude⁷ confidence, not just in themselves, but in the American people as well. The best ones have had an intangible⁸ charisma⁹ that creates public confidence.

As leader of the executive branch, the President is primarily responsible for seeing that the work of government is done. A famous sign sat on President Harry Truman's desk that said "The buck stops here." The responsibility to administer and execute the laws of the land squarely rests on the President's shoulders. The president must therefore recruit and appoint many people to top government jobs. Cabinet members¹⁰, many sub-Cabinet positions, federal judges including Supreme Court Justices, ambassadors, top military leaders, and heads of independent government agencies are all appointments filled by the President. Even though nominees are subject to consent by the Senate¹¹, the fact that Presidents control more than 4,000 appointments to government service makes this responsibility an important one.

PRESIDENTS AS AGENDA SETTERS

Setting a political agenda has been a role of the President that has grown in recent years. The Founding Fathers clearly intended for Congress take the lead in setting America's priorities and determining its policies. Today though, Presidents have plans for Social Security¹², welfare programs¹³, taxes, inflation¹⁴, and public education, among others. In foreign policy, they often act first and then consult Congress. Virtually all recent Presidents regularly recommend legislation¹⁵ to Congress.

Effective Presidents have used the State of the Union address¹⁶, given yearly at the start of each congressional session, to set an agenda. Modern Presidents now use the media to bring attention to their proposals and to place pressure on legislators. A President may threaten to veto¹⁷ a bill before it gets to the

⁵ "Dignitaries" are people considered to be important because of high rank or office.

⁶ Trivial (adjective) : of little value or importance

⁷ Exude (verb) : to display strongly and openly

⁸ Intangible (adjective) : not able to be touched, an idea

⁹ Charisma (noun) : charm that can inspire loyalty or enthusiasm in others

¹⁰ "Cabinet" a group of high-ranking state officials

¹¹ These nominees are subject to a confirmation hearing and must receive majority support from U.S. Senators in order to be confirmed.

¹² "Social Security" is a program in which the government provides money to people who are unable to work because they are old, disabled, or unemployed.

¹³ financial support given to people in need

¹⁴ "Inflation" is the general increase in prices and fall in the purchasing value of money.

¹⁵ "Legislation" is the act of making laws

¹⁶ The State of the Union address consists of the president reporting on the state of the nation and outlining a legislative program.

¹⁷ "Veto" refers to the President's power to legally reject laws that are passed by Congress. When a President vetoes a law, Congress can override that veto with a two-thirds vote from the House and Senate.

Oval Office. This action lets legislators know the President's agenda and pressures them to rethink bills that they know will be vetoed.

Can any one person hope to be able to successfully hold the President's job? The great author John Steinbeck commented, "We give the President more work than a man can do, more responsibility than a man should take, more pressure than a man can bear."

An Incredible Job: Being America's President by USHistory.org is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

What Students are Learning:

- CC.1.2.8.A – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CC.1.2.8.B – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
- CC.1.2.8.C – Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.

Background and Context for Parents and Guardians:

The information text "An Incredible Job: Being America's President" discusses the variety of responsibilities and duties required of the President.

As students read, they will be considering the themes of America and social change and revolution as they relate to the text. Students will try to answer these big questions :

- "How do people create change?" and
- "What makes America unique?"

Ways to support your student:

- Word Study- Review the vocabulary words listed below with your child. Practice using these words when talking about the text. Visit www.wordreference.com for translations and www.dictionary.com to hear the word pronounced.
 - **Scope** (noun) : the area, amount, or subject matter covered
 - Urban (adjective) : in, relating to, or characteristic of a city or town
 - Trivial (adjective) : of little value or importance
 - **Exude** (verb) : to display strongly and openly
 - **Legislation** (noun): the act of making laws
 - Intangible (adjective) : not able to be touched; an idea
 - Charisma (noun) : charm that can inspire loyalty or enthusiasm in others
- After reading, ask questions about the text. These questions could include:
 - What did you think the text was mostly about?
 - What do you think the author wanted you to know about the topic? That is an interesting point. What made you think that?
 - What did you learn about America? What did you learn about social change and revolution?

Online Resources for Students:

Video: Watch [Presidential Power: Crash Course Government and Politics #11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5l02sK5LovI) at home with your child.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5l02sK5LovI>

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When you access this link from home you will need to log in with the barcode number on your library card. If you do not have a library card, click on the link that reads: Apply for an e-card now. You will need to enter your email and zip code. You will receive a login to Powerlibrary.

Building Background Knowledge:

The President: The Toughest Job in America?

FEBRUARY 18, 2019 By Bryan Brown

From: <https://junior.scholastic.com/issues/2018-19/021819/the-toughest-job-in-america.html#1020L>

The U.S. presidency is one of the most powerful positions in the world—and its responsibilities are huge. Get an inside look at one seriously busy job.

Nobody said being president would be easy. U.S. President Donald Trump leads the planet's strongest superpower. He commands massive armies and can tap huge financial resources with the stroke of a pen. Yet in the two years since he's taken office, other people in the U.S. government have kept saying no to him.

Recently, for example, Democrats in Congress blocked the president's plan to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border—at least temporarily. And last November, a federal court judge stopped the president's attempt to restrict how migrants can apply to stay in the U.S.

Trump isn't the only president who has struggled with the limits of his power. Every American leader going back to George Washington (in office 1789-1797) has as well. That's just how the Framers of the U.S. Constitution planned it. They organized the federal government so that none of its three branches—the executive branch (headed by the president), the legislative branch (Congress), and the judicial branch (the courts)—would be more powerful than the others.

Another thing unites our presidents: Almost all of them found that the duties of the office were much harder to fulfill than they expected. Indeed, many experts have called the presidency “an impossible job.”

Most of the president's basic tasks are outlined by Article II of the U.S. Constitution. Others were created by acts of Congress or through tradition. All together, they form a position of great authority—and enormous responsibility. Here's a look at the seven main roles that make up the tough job of our nation's highest elected official.

Jobs of the President

The president's main job is to oversee the federal government. Think of him as the boss of one of the world's biggest companies. (The U.S. government has nearly 3 million employees!)

To help keep this organization running smoothly, each president chooses a group of senior advisers called a Cabinet. They supervise government departments including Defense (which oversees the armed forces) and Education. George Washington's first Cabinet consisted of just four people. Modern presidents' Cabinets are much larger. Today, Trump has 24 advisers—including the directors of Homeland Security and the Central Intelligence Agency.

As the head of the executive branch, the president must also carry out the nation's laws. Although laws are passed by Congress, the president decides which ones are most important to enforce—and how to do so. The president also appoints federal judges and nominates people for open seats on the U.S. Supreme Court. The president's choices for both judges and Cabinet members must be approved by the U.S. Senate

Guardian of the Economy

The president shares responsibility for the economy with Congress. But as the nation's chief executive, he is expected to help it run smoothly—and as fairly for all Americans as possible. Overseeing the economy includes many factors, such as trying to keep the unemployment rate down and aiding businesses. Every year, the president proposes a budget for the country. This determines how much money each part of the government, such as the military, will get to operate. Congress adds its own priorities—and sometimes changes the president's suggested budget completely. The final budget must be passed by Congress and signed by the president.

Head of State

As the head of state, the president acts as the highest living symbol of our country. When he welcomes Super Bowl champions or hosts an official dinner at the White House, he is representing the nation. Americans look to their president for inspiration, especially when he engages with foreign leaders. His actions are expected to represent the nation's highest ideals and commitment to democracy.

Political Party Leader

The president serves as the leader of his political party and plays a key role in shaping its positions on important issues. He helps raise money for the party and campaigns for members who have supported his policies and are running for office. Experts say that Barack Obama (2009-2017) reshaped the Democratic Party during his presidency. Under Obama's direction, the party became much bolder in its support of rights for minorities and undocumented immigrants.

Head of Foreign Policy

Another crucial presidential task is maintaining America's role as a world leader. A president has to decide what the nation's relationships with other governments will be like. His goals and actions—including meeting with foreign leaders, often in tough negotiations—make up his foreign policy. Chief among President Trump's foreign policy aims is convincing North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to give up his nuclear weapons. Presidents also appoint ambassadors who represent the U.S. to foreign nations.

The president has the sole power to negotiate treaties—formal agreements with other countries. Treaties serve important functions, such as ending wars or promoting trade. Before such agreements can take effect, however, they have to be ratified by the Senate.

Commander in Chief

The Constitution divides the power to make war between the president and Congress. Only Congress can actually declare war on another country. But the Constitution names the president as commander in chief of the nation's armed forces.

That means the president makes major decisions on where and when troops will be deployed, who will lead them, and how the U.S. will use its weapons. The president also has what experts call the “awesome responsibility” of deciding whether to bomb a foreign country. Harry S. Truman (1945-1953) had to make that choice when he ordered atomic bombs to be dropped on two Japanese cities, the action that ended World War II (1939-1945).

Legislative Leader

Only Congress has the power to make laws. But presidents have several ways to influence legislation. As a bill works its way through Congress, the president will call members of the Senate and the House of Representatives to urge them to vote for or against it. He will also invite members of Congress to the White House to discuss a proposed bill.

Presidents have another tool when it comes to new laws passed by Congress: They can veto (reject) legislation that they don't like. Congress can override the president's veto by a two-thirds vote of both the House and the Senate.

Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board (This should be used for lessons 3 and 4):
 “An Incredible Job: Being America’s President”

Directions: Read the text “An Incredible Job: Being America’s President”. You can access the text above. Then, choose **4** activities from the choice board below. You should complete at least two activities from each row.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>R o w 1</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 1</p> <p>Complete a first read of the text “An Incredible Job: Being America’s President”</p> <p>Write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 things that interested you about the text. ● 3 questions you have about the text. | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 2</p> <p>Read “An Incredible Job: Being America’s President”. Then answer the questions listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the primary roles of the president? ● What is the central idea of the text? Support your response with evidence from the text. | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 3</p> <p>Word Study: Read the definitions of the vocabulary words (scope, urban, trivial, exude, intangible, charisma)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write two sentences using each word. ● The sentences are to be grade appropriate and use at least eight words in each sentence. |
| <p>R o w 2</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 4</p> <p>Complete a second read of the text. As you read, take notes on the key ideas of the text.</p> <p>Then, write a summary of the text. Make sure that your summary includes essential details from the text. Your summary should be at least 5 sentences long.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 5</p> <p>Text dependent analysis: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>The author claims that the President has an “enlarging scope of responsibilities” (Paragraph 2). Write an essay analyzing how the author supports this claim. Support your response with evidence from the text.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 6</p> <p>Respond to the text: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>In the context of the text, how do people create change? How does the President play a role in creating meaningful change? Compare the role of the President with that of the Supreme Court. Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.</p> |

Grade: 8 Subject: English Language Arts

Topic: President Bush's "Islam is Peace" Speech

George W. Bush was the 43rd president of the United States and served from 2001 to 2009. On September 17, 2001, less than a week following the September 11th terrorist attacks, President Bush gave a speech at the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C. addressing the treatment of Muslims in the United States. As you read, take notes on how Muslims are treated in the United States following the September 11th terrorist attacks.



"911: President George W. Bush at Islamic Center, 09/17/2001." by The U.S. National Archives is licensed under No known restrictions.

Thank you all very much for your hospitality. We've just had a — wide-ranging discussions on the matter at hand. Like the good folks standing with me, the American people were appalled and outraged at last Tuesday's attacks. And so were Muslims all across the world. Both Americans and Muslim friends and citizens, tax-paying citizens, and Muslims in nations were just appalled and could not believe what we saw on our TV screens.

These acts of violence against innocents violate the fundamental tenets¹ of the Islamic faith. And it's important for my fellow Americans to understand that.

The English translation is not as eloquent² as the original Arabic, but let me quote from the Koran,³ itself: In the long run, evil in the extreme will be the end of those who do evil. For that they rejected the signs of Allah⁴ and held them up to ridicule.⁵

1. Tenet (noun) : a core belief or idea that is important to a group

2. Eloquent (adjective) : having or showing the ability to use language clearly and effectively

3. The Koran is the sacred text of Islam, written in Arabic. The text is believed to be the word of God as dictated to Muhammad by the archangel Gabriel.

4. "God" in Arabic

5. Ridicule (noun) : the act of making fun of someone or something in a cruel or harsh way

The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent peace. They represent evil and war.

When we think of Islam we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world. Billions of people find comfort and solace⁶ and peace. And that's made brothers and sisters out of every race — out of every race.

America counts millions of Muslims amongst our citizens, and Muslims make an incredibly valuable contribution to our country. Muslims are doctors, lawyers, law professors, members of the military, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, moms and dads. And they need to be treated with respect. In our anger and emotion, our fellow Americans must treat each other with respect.

Women who cover their heads⁷ in this country must feel comfortable going outside their homes. Moms who wear cover must be not intimidated in America. That's not the America I know. That's not the America I value.

I've been told that some fear to leave; some don't want to go shopping for their families; some don't want to go about their ordinary daily routines because, by wearing cover, they're afraid they'll be intimidated. That should not and that will not stand in America.

Those who feel like they can intimidate our fellow citizens to take out their anger don't represent the best of America, they represent the worst of humankind, and they should be ashamed of that kind of behavior.

This is a great country. It's a great country because we share the same values of respect and dignity and human worth. And it is my honor to be meeting with leaders who feel just the same way I do. They're outraged, they're sad. They love America just as much as I do.

I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come by. And may God bless us all.

6. Solace (noun) : someone or something that gives a feeling of comfort to a person who is sad, depressed, etc.

7. A common practice of Muslim women, in which they wear a veil (hijab) that usually covers the head and chest, when in the presence of adult males outside of their immediate family.

President Bush's "Islam is Peace" Speech by President George W. Bush is in the public domain.

What Students are Learning:

- CC.1.2.8.A – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CC.1.2.8.B – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
- CC.1.2.8.C – Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.

Background and Context for Parents and Guardians:

In "President Bush's 'Islam is Peace' Speech," President Bush addresses the treatment of Muslims in the United States, less than one week after the September 11th terrorist attacks.

As students read, they will be discussing the themes of morality, prejudice and discrimination, and war and peace as they relate to the text.

Students will try to answer these big questions :

- "What is good and how do we know?",
- "How does prejudice emerge?", and
- "How can we achieve peace?"

Ways to support your student:

- Word Study- Review the vocabulary words listed below with your child. Practice using these words when talking about the text.
 - **Tenet** (noun) : a core belief or idea that is important to a group
 - **Eloquent** (adjective) : having or showing the ability to use language clearly and effectively
 - **Ridicule** (noun) : the act of making fun of someone or something in a cruel or harsh way
 - **Solace** (noun) : someone or something that gives a feeling of comfort to a person who is sad, depressed, etc.
- After reading, ask questions about the text. These questions could include:
 - What did you think the text was mostly about?
 - What do you think the author wanted you to know about the topic? That is an interesting point. What made you think that?
 - What did you learn about prejudice and discrimination? What did you learn about war and peace?

Online Resources for Students:

Video: Watch [US President Bush Visits the Islamic Centre – 2001](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liudIJFg8UQ) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liudIJFg8UQ>) at home with your child.

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Building Background Knowledge:

What happened on September 11th, 2011?

A group of men hijacked two planes and flew them into the World Trade Center, a pair of skyscrapers in downtown Manhattan (New York City). After several enormous explosions, both buildings collapsed, killing

almost 3,000 people. On that same day, two additional planes were hijacked by members of the same group. One was flown into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, killing 125 people, while the other crashed in a field in Pennsylvania killing all on board. Though it was never proven, that last plane was thought to be on its way to the White House or the Capitol.

People throughout the United States were shocked by these attacks on American soil. They came together, asking how this could have happened and what it meant. In New York City people consoled and supported each other. They set up impromptu memorials to remember the victims, including some that called for peace and no war. People from other parts of the country, including children and young people, sent cards and gifts, and some came to the city to help out.

It was a difficult time for Muslims and Arab-Americans, because the men who carried out the attacks were Arabs and Muslims (most of them citizens of Saudi Arabia) who said they were waging a holy war against the United States. As a result, some people took out their anger on Muslims and Arab-Americans who had nothing to do with the attacks: some children were teased or harassed in school; some Muslims and Arab-Americans were threatened; in Texas three Muslims were killed. Political leaders, including then President George W. Bush, cautioned that 9/11 should not be an excuse for discriminating against anybody. The site where the Twin Towers came down has been known as Ground Zero ever since. It has become a place for people to go and honor and remember those who were killed that day.

The September 11th attacks changed the course of history. They led to other events that affect our lives today. Airport security has been tightened. Congress passed laws aimed at preventing further acts of terrorism, which critics say have infringed on our civil liberties. And as a result of 9/11 the United States initiated two wars - in Afghanistan and Iraq - in which hundreds of thousands have died.

Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board (This should be used for lessons 5 and 6):
President Bush's "Islam is Peace" Speech

Directions: Read the text President Bush's "Islam is Peace" Speech. You can access the text above. Then, choose **4** activities from the choice board below. You should complete at least two activities from each **row**.

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>R o w 1</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 1</p> <p>Complete a first read of President Bush's "Islam is Peace" Speech</p> <p>Write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 things that interested you about the text. ● 3 questions you have about the text. | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 2</p> <p>Read President Bush's "Islam is Peace" Speech. Then answer the questions listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the central idea of this text? ● How does President Bush support his claim that Muslims are treated differently after the terrorist attacks of 9/11? | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 3</p> <p>Word Study: Read the definitions of the vocabulary words (tennent, eloquent, ridicule, solace)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write two sentences using each word. ● The sentences are to be grade appropriate and use at least eight words in each sentence. |
| <p>R o w 2</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 4</p> <p>Complete a second read of the text. As you read, take notes on the key ideas of the text.</p> <p>Then, write a summary of the text. Make sure that your summary includes essential details from the text. Your summary should be at least 5-7 sentences long.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 5</p> <p>Text dependent analysis: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>Authors often use rhetorical elements to convey their ideas. Write an essay analyzing how former President Bush uses facts and reason, as well as emotional pleas to convey his point. Support your response with evidence from the text.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 6</p> <p>Respond to the text: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>In "An Incredible Job: Being America's President" (Lessons 3 & 4) the author discusses the various roles that the President fulfills. How does this speech exemplify the many roles that the President must play. Support your response with evidence from the text.</p> |

Lessons Seven and Eight

Grade: 8 Subject: English Language Arts

Topic: Love and Friendship

Emily Brontë (1818-1848) was an English poet and novelist. While growing up, Brontë spent much of her time creating stories with her siblings, of whom two were also famous authors. Brontë was known for her solitary nature, and so it is interesting to consider her perspective on love and friendship. As you read, take notes on the poet's use of figurative language.



["holly berries"](#) by Liz West is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Love is like the wild rose-briar,
Friendship like the holly-tree
The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms
But which will bloom most constantly?

The wild rose-briar is sweet in spring,
Its summer blossoms scent the air;
Yet wait till winter comes again
And who will call the wild-briar fair?
Then scorn the silly rose-wreath now

And deck thee with the holly's sheen,
That when December blights¹ thy brow
He may still leave thy garland green.

Love and Friendship by Emily Brontë is in the public domain.

Notes

1. Blight (verb) : to spoil, harm, or damage

What Students are Learning:

- CC.1.3.8.A – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CC.1.3.8.D Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- CC.1.3.8.F– Analyze the influence of words and phrases in a text including figurative and connotative, and technical meanings, and how they shape meaning and tone.



Background and Context for Parents and Guardians:

Emily Brontë (1818-1848) was an English poet and novelist. While growing up, Brontë spent much of her time creating stories with her siblings, two of whom were also famous authors. In this poem, Emily Brontë uses symbolism to argue that friendship — not love — is everlasting.

As they read, students will consider the themes of friendship and family and love as they are related to the text.

Students will try to answer these big questions :

- "How are we changed by love?" and
- "What is a friend?"

Ways to support your student:

- Word Study- Review the vocabulary words listed below with your child. Practice using these words when talking about the text. The words in **bold** are most important for students' understanding of the key ideas in the text.
 - **Deck** (verb) : to decorate or dress
 - Briar (noun) : a wild plant with thorny or prickly stems
 - **Sheen** (noun) : the quality of being shiny
 - **Blight** (verb) : to spoil, harm, or damage
- After reading, ask questions about the text. These questions could include:
 - What did you think the text was mostly about?
 - What do you think the author wanted you to know about the topic? That is an interesting point. What made you think that?
 - What did you learn about love? What did you learn about friendship?

Online Resources for Students:

Video: Watch [26 Facts about the Science of Friendship - Mental Floss' The List Show](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEazK4jMvt8) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEazK4jMvt8>) at home with your child.

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Building Background Knowledge:

Emily Bronte

Emily Brontë is best known for authoring the novel 'Wuthering Heights.' She was the sister of Charlotte and Anne Brontë, also famous authors.

Who Was Emily Brontë?

Emily Jane Brontë lived a quiet life in Yorkshire with her clergyman father; brother, Branwell Brontë; and two sisters, [Charlotte](#) and Anne. The sisters enjoyed writing poetry and novels, which they published under pseudonyms. As "Ellis Bell," Emily wrote *Wuthering Heights* (1847)—her only published novel—which garnered wide critical and commercial acclaim.

Early Life

Born on July 30, 1818, in Thornton, Yorkshire, England, Emily Brontë is best remembered for her 1847 novel, *Wuthering Heights*. She was not the only creative talent in her family—her sisters Charlotte and Anne enjoyed some literary success as well. Her father had published several works during his lifetime, too. Emily was the fifth child of Reverend Patrick Brontë and his wife, Maria Branwell Brontë. The family moved to Haworth in April 1821. Only a few months later, Brontë's mother died of cancer; her death came nearly nine months after the birth of her sister, Anne. Her mother's sister, Elizabeth Branwell, came to live with the family to help care for the children.

At the age of 6, Emily was sent to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge with Charlotte and her two oldest sisters, Elizabeth and Maria. Both Elizabeth and Maria became seriously ill at school and returned home, where they died of tuberculosis in 1825. Brontë's father removed both Emily and Charlotte from the school as well.

At home in Haworth, Brontë enjoyed her quiet life. She read extensively and began to make up stories with her siblings. The surviving Brontë children, which included brother Branwell, had strong imaginations. They created tales inspired by toy soldiers given to Branwell by their father. In 1835, the shy Emily tried leaving home for school. She went with Charlotte to Miss Wooler's school in Roe Head where Charlotte worked as a teacher. But she stayed only a few months before heading back to Haworth.

Coming from a poor family, Brontë tried to find work. She became a teacher at the Law Hill School in September 1837, but she left her position the following March. Brontë and her sister Charlotte traveled to Brussels in 1842 to study, but the death of their aunt Elizabeth forced them to return home.

'Wuthering Heights'

Some of Emily's earliest known works involve a fictional world called Gondal, which she created with her sister Anne. She wrote both prose and poems about this imaginary place and its inhabitants. Emily also wrote other poems as well. Her sister Charlotte discovered some of Emily's poems and sought to publish them along with her own work and some by Anne. The three sisters used male pen names for their collection—*Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell*. Published in 1846, the book only sold a few copies and garnered little attention.

Again publishing as Ellis Bell, Brontë published her defining work, *Wuthering Heights*, in December 1847. The complex novel explores two families—the Earnshaws and the Lintons—across two generations and their stately homes, *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*. Heathcliff, an orphan taken in by the



Earnshaws, is the driving force between the action in the book. He was first motivated by his love for his Catherine Earnshaw, then by his desire for revenge against her for what he believed to be rejection.

Death and Legacy

At first, reviewers did not know what to make of *Wuthering Heights*. It was only after Brontë's death that the book developed its reputation as a literary masterwork. She died of tuberculosis on December 19, 1848, nearly two months after her brother, Branwell, succumbed to the same disease. Her sister Anne also fell ill and died of tuberculosis the following May.

Interest in Brontë's work and life remains strong today. The parsonage where Brontë spent much of her life is now a museum. The Brontë Society operates the museum and works to preserve and honor the work of the Brontë sisters.

From: <https://www.biography.com/writer/emily-bronte>

Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board (This should be used for lessons 7 and 8):
“Love and Friendship”

Directions: Read the text “Love and Friendship”. You can access the text above. Then, choose **4** activities from the choice board below. You should complete at least two activities from each **row**.

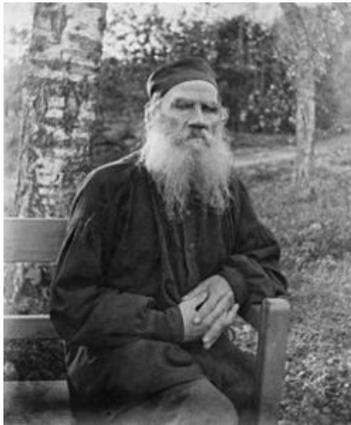
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>R o w 1</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 1</p> <p>Complete a first read of the text “Love and Friendship”</p> <p>Write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 things that interested you about the text. ● 3 questions you have about the text. | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 2</p> <p>Read “Love and Friendship” Then answer the questions listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the poem, what is the most significant difference between the rose-briar and the holly-tree? ● What is the theme of the poem? | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 3</p> <p>Word Study: Read the definitions of the vocabulary word (blight + one additional word of your choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write two sentences using each word. ● The sentences are to be grade appropriate and use at least eight words in each sentence. |
| <p>R o w 2</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 4</p> <p>Respond to the text: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>Which is more lasting, love or friendship? Support your answer with evidence in the poem, and pay special attention to the symbolism the speaker uses.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 5</p> <p>Text dependent analysis: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>Authors often use the rhyme scheme to develop the deeper meaning of a poem. Write an essay analyzing how the poem’s rhyme scheme contributes to the overall tone and theme. Support your response with evidence from the text.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Activity 6</p> <p>Respond to the text: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>According to the text, what are the qualities of the holly-tree? And how does that answer the question: What is friendship? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other art or literature in your answer.</p> |

Lessons Nine and Ten

Grade: 8 Subject: English Language Arts

Topic: The Three Questions

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was a famous Russian author, perhaps best known for his novels *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. In the following short story, a king looks for answers to three questions in order to make himself a better ruler. As you read, take notes on the varying responses that the king receives.



["Leo Tolstoy 1897, black and white, 37767u"](#) by F. W. Taylor is in the public domain.

It once occurred to a certain king, that if he always knew the right time to begin everything; if he knew who were the right people to listen to, and whom to avoid; and, above all, if he always knew what was the most important thing to do, he would never fail in anything he might undertake.

And this thought having occurred to him, he had it proclaimed throughout his kingdom that he would give a great reward to anyone who would teach him what was the right time for every action, and who were the most necessary people, and how he might know what was the most important thing to do.

And learned men came to the King, but they all answered his questions differently.

In reply to the first question, some said that to know the right time for every action, one must draw up in advance, a table of days, months and years, and must live strictly according to it. Only thus, said they, could everything be done at its proper time. Others declared that it was impossible to decide beforehand the right time for every action; but that, not letting oneself be absorbed in idle¹ pastimes, one should always attend to all that was going on, and then do what was most needful. Others, again, said that however attentive the King might be to what was going on, it was impossible for one man to decide correctly the right time for every action, but that he should have a Council of wise men, who would help him to fix the proper time for everything.

1. Idle (adjective) : not busy, working, or active



But then again others said there were some things which could not wait to be laid before a Council, but about which one had at once to decide whether to undertake them or not. But in order to decide that, one must know beforehand what was going to happen. It is only magicians who know that; and, therefore, in order to know the right time for every action, one must consult magicians.

Equally various were the answers to the second question. Some said, the people the King most needed were his councilors; others, the priests; others, the doctors; while some said the warriors were the most necessary.

To the third question, as to what was the most important occupation: some replied that the most important thing in the world was science. Others said it was skill in warfare; and others, again, that it was religious worship.

All the answers being different, the King agreed with none of them, and gave the reward to none. But still wishing to find the right answers to his questions, he decided to consult a hermit¹⁸, widely renowned for his wisdom.

The hermit lived in a wood which he never quitted, and he received none but common folk. So the King put on simple clothes, and before reaching the hermit's cell dismounted from his horse, and, leaving his bodyguard behind, went on alone.

When the King approached, the hermit was digging the ground in front of his hut. Seeing the King, he greeted him and went on digging. The hermit was frail and weak, and each time he stuck his spade into the ground and turned a little earth, he breathed heavily.

The King went up to him and said: "I have come to you, wise hermit, to ask you to answer three questions: How can I learn to do the right thing at the right time? Who are the people I most need, and to whom should I, therefore, pay more attention than to the rest? And, what affairs are the most important, and need my first attention?"

The hermit listened to the King, but answered nothing. He just spat on his hand and recommenced digging. "You are tired," said the King, "let me take the spade and work awhile for you."

"Thanks!" said the hermit, and, giving the spade to the King, he sat down on the ground.

When he had dug two beds¹⁹, the King stopped and repeated his questions. The hermit again gave no answer, but rose, stretched out his hand for the spade, and said:

"Now rest awhile—and let me work a bit."

But the King did not give him the spade, and continued to dig. One hour passed, and another. The sun began to sink behind the trees, and the King at last stuck the spade into the ground, and said:

¹⁸ Hermit (noun) : a person who lives away from other people and rarely leaves their house, usually for a religious reason

¹⁹ "Beds" in this text means not a place for sleeping, but for planting seeds

"I came to you, wise man, for an answer to my questions. If you can give me none, tell me so, and I will return home."

"Here comes some one running," said the hermit, "let us see who it is."

The King turned round, and saw a bearded man come running out of the wood. The man held his hands pressed against his stomach, and blood was flowing from under them. When he reached the King, he fell fainting on the ground moaning feebly. The King and the hermit unfastened the man's clothing. There was a large wound in his stomach. The King washed it as best he could, and bandaged it with his handkerchief and with a towel the hermit had. But the blood would not stop flowing, and the King again and again removed the bandage soaked with warm blood, and washed and rebandaged the wound. When at last the blood ceased flowing, the man revived and asked for something to drink. The King brought fresh water and gave it to him.

Meanwhile the sun had set, and it had become cool. So the King, with the hermit's help, carried the wounded man into the hut and laid him on the bed. Lying on the bed the man closed his eyes and was quiet; but the King was so tired with his walk and with the work he had done, that he crouched down on the threshold, and also fell asleep — so soundly that he slept all through the short summer night. When he awoke in the morning, it was long before he could remember where he was, or who was the strange bearded man lying on the bed and gazing intently at him with shining eyes.

"Forgive me!" said the bearded man in a weak voice, when he saw that the King was awake and was looking at him.

"I do not know you, and have nothing to forgive you for," said the King.

"You do not know me, but I know you. I am that enemy of yours who swore to revenge himself on you, because you executed his brother and seized his property. I knew you had gone alone to see the hermit, and I resolved to kill you on your way back. But the day passed and you did not return. So I came out from my ambush to find you, and I came upon your bodyguard, and they recognized me, and wounded me. I escaped from them, but should have bled to death had you not dressed my wound. I wished to kill you, and you have saved my life. Now, if I live, and if you wish it, I will serve you as your most faithful slave, and will bid my sons do the same. Forgive me!"

The King was very glad to have made peace with his enemy so easily, and to have gained him for a friend, and he not only forgave him, but said he would send his servants and his own physician to attend him, and promised to restore his property.

Having taken leave of the wounded man, the King went out into the porch and looked around for the hermit. Before going away he wished once more to beg an answer to the questions he had put. The hermit was outside, on his knees, sowing seeds in the beds that had been dug the day before.

The King approached him, and said:

"For the last time, I pray you to answer my questions, wise man."

"You have already been answered!" said the hermit, still crouching on his thin legs, and looking up at the King, who stood before him.

"How answered? What do you mean?" asked the King.

"Do you not see," replied the hermit. "If you had not pitied my weakness yesterday, and had not dug those beds for me, but had gone your way, that man would have attacked you, and you would have repented² of not having stayed with me. So the most important time was when you were digging the beds; and I was the most important man; and to do me good was your most important business. Afterwards when that man ran to us, the most important time was when you were attending to him, for if you had not bound up his wounds he would have died without having made peace with you. So he was the most important man, and what you did for him was your most important business. Remember then: there is only one time that is important — Now! It is the most important time because it is the only time when we have any power. The most necessary man is he with whom you are, for no man knows whether he will ever have dealings with anyone else: and the most important affair is, to do him good, because for that purpose alone was man sent into this life!"

2. Repent (verb) : to feel sorry for or dissatisfied with something one has done

The Three Questions by Leo Tolstoy is in the public domain.

What Students are Learning:

- CC.1.3.8.A – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CC.1.3.8.B– Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
- CC.1.3.8.C – Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Background and Context for Parents and Guardians:

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was a famous Russian author, perhaps best known for his novels War and Peace and Anna Karenina. In this short story, a king looks for three answers to three questions in order to make himself a better ruler.

As we read, we will be discussing the themes of resilience & success and war & peace as they relate to the text. We are trying to answer these big questions :

- "Why do people succeed?" and
- "How can we achieve peace?"

Ways to support your student:

- Word Study- Review the vocabulary words listed below with your child. Practice using these words when talking about the text. The words in **bold** are most important for students' understanding of the key ideas in the text.
 - **Hermit** (noun) : a person who lives away from other people and rarely leaves their house
 - **Idle** (adjective) : not busy, working, or active
 - **Repent** (verb) : to feel sorry for or dissatisfied with something one has done
- After reading, ask questions about the text. These questions could include:

- What did you think the text was mostly about?
- What do you think the author wanted you to know about the topic? That is an interesting point. What made you think that?
- What did you learn about war and peace?

Online Resources for Students:

Video: Watch the following clips with your child at home:

- ['Starfish into the Sea'](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-aVMdJ3Aok) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-aVMdJ3Aok>)

Power Library: is the online portal to all that Pennsylvania libraries offer. This is the place to find 24/7 access to newspapers, magazines, journals, historical documents and photos, online databases, and eBooks. Research a subject. Learn about your family history. Locate a title. Explore career options. It's all here at POWER Library.

Link: <https://powerlibrary.org>

When you access this link from home you will need to log in with the barcode number on your library card. If you do not have a library card, click on the link that reads: Apply for an e-card now. You will need to enter your email and zip code. You will receive a login to Powerlibrary.

Building Background Knowledge:

Leo Tolstoy facts

*Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (9 September 1828 – 20 November 1910) was a [Russian novelist](#) and [anarchist](#), famous for writing the books [War and Peace](#) and *Anna Karenina*, and many other works. He was a [Christian](#) and believed in [non-violence](#). His work *The Kingdom of God is within you* has influenced people like [Mahatma Gandhi](#) and [Martin Luther King](#).*

Life and career



Tolstoy at age 20, 1848



Tolstoy was born at Yasnaya Polyana, the family [estate](#) in the region of Tula, [Russia](#). When he was young his parents died, so he and his siblings were brought up by relatives. At the age of 16, he began studying law and oriental languages. Unfortunately, he left University in the middle of his studies and spent much of his time in [Moscow](#) and [Saint Petersburg](#). Later on in his life, he joined the Army with his brother after running up some heavy gambling debts. It was at that time that he started writing.

His conversion from a wealthy society [author](#) to the non-violent and spiritual [anarchist](#) of his later days was notable. It was caused by his experience in the army as well as two trips around Europe in 1857 and 1860–61. Others who followed a similar path were Alexander Herzen, [Mikhail Bakunin](#) and [Peter Kropotkin](#).

During his 1857 visit, Tolstoy saw a public execution in [Paris](#), an experience which marked the rest of his life. He married Sofia Behrs in 1862.

After *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy concentrated on Christian themes, and his later novels such as *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886) and *What Is to Be Done?* (1886) develop a radical Christian philosophy which led to his [excommunication](#) from the [Russian Orthodox Church](#) in 1901.

After shaping both his political and literary development in Europe, he returned to Russia and founded 13 schools for Russia's [peasant](#) children.

Death

Tolstoy died in 1910, at the age of 82. He died of [pneumonia](#).

Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board (This should be used for lessons 9 and 10):
“The Three Questions”

Directions: Read the text “The Three Questions”. Then, choose **4** activities from the choice board below. You should complete at least two activities from each **row**.

| | Activity 1 | Activity 2 | Activity 3 |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| R o w 1 | <p>Complete a first read of the text “The Three Questions”</p> <p>Write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 things that interested you about the text. • 3 questions you have about the text. | <p>Read “The Three Questions”. Then answer the questions listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What problems does the King face? • Explain the role that irony played in moving the plot forward. • What is the theme of the text? Support your response with evidence from the text. | <p>Word Study: Read the definitions of the vocabulary words (idle, repent)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write two sentences using each word. • The sentences are to be grade appropriate and use at least eight words in each sentence. |
| R o w 2 | <p>Complete a second read of the text. As you read, take notes on the main plot points of the text.</p> <p>Then, write a summary of the text. Make sure that your summary includes essential details from the text. Your summary should be at least 5-7 sentences long.</p> | <p>Respond to the text: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>In the final paragraph of this story, the hermit tells the king that it is most important to focus on the present moment "because it is the only time when we have any power." Do you agree with this statement?</p> <p>Even if you do agree, make the opposite argument -- that it is most important to focus on the past.</p> | <p>Respond to the text: Write an essay responding to the prompt below.</p> <p>In this story, a king went in search of knowledge that would make him a more powerful ruler. Why do people succeed? Is it from excessive planning, luck, or good will?</p> |



Rubrics

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT DOMAIN SCORING GUIDE

| | FOCUS | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | STYLE | CONVENTIONS |
|----------|---|--|---|--|--|
| | <i>The single controlling point made with an awareness of task (mode) about a specific topic.</i> | <i>The presence of ideas developed through facts, examples, anecdotes, details, opinions, statistics, reasons and/or explanations.</i> | <i>The order developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using transitional devices including introduction and conclusion.</i> | <i>The choice, use and arrangement of words and sentence structures that create tone and voice.</i> | <i>The use of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.</i> |
| 4 | Sharp, distinct controlling point made about a single topic with evident awareness of task (mode) | Substantial, specific and/or illustrative content demonstrating strong development and sophisticated ideas | Sophisticated arrangement of content with evident and/or subtle transitions | Precise, illustrative use of a variety of words and sentence structures to create consistent writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience | Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation |
| 3 | Apparent point made about a single topic with sufficient awareness of task (mode) | Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation | Functional arrangement of content that sustains a logical order with some evidence of transitions | Generic use of a variety of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience | Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation |
| 2 | No apparent point but evidence of a specific topic | Limited content with inadequate elaboration or explanation | Confused or inconsistent arrangement of content with or without attempts at transition | Limited word choice and control of sentence structures that inhibit voice and tone | Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation |
| 1 | Minimal evidence of a topic | Superficial and/or minimal content | Minimal control of content arrangement | Minimal variety in word choice and minimal control of sentence structures | Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation |

ENGLISH COMPOSITION CONVENTIONS SCORING GUIDELINES

| Scoring Domain | Score Point 4 At this score point, the writer— | Score Point 3 At this score point, the writer— | Score Point 2 At this score point, the writer— | Score Point 1 At this score point, the writer— | Score Point 0 At this score point, the writer— |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| Grammar and Usage | demonstrates command of standard English grammar and usage | demonstrates control of standard English grammar and usage | demonstrates limited or inconsistent control of standard English grammar and usage | demonstrates minimal control of standard English grammar and usage | demonstrates little or no control of standard English grammar and usage |
| Mechanics | demonstrates command of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling | demonstrates control of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling | demonstrates limited or inconsistent control of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling | demonstrates minimal control of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling | demonstrates little or no control of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling |
| Sentence Formation | demonstrates command of sentence formation | demonstrates control of sentence formation | demonstrates limited or inconsistent control of sentence formation | demonstrates minimal control of sentence formation | demonstrates little or no control of sentence formation |
| Summation | At this score point, the writer makes few errors, and errors do not interfere with reader understanding. | At this score point, the writer makes few errors, and errors seldom interfere with reader understanding. | At this score point, the writer makes errors, and errors may interfere with reader understanding. | At this score point, the writer makes errors, and errors often interfere with reader understanding. | At this score point, the writer makes errors, and errors consistently interfere with reader understanding. |



How to Structure an Essay

Introductory paragraph: The introductory paragraph allows students to introduce their topic. The introductory paragraph contains a thesis statement and serves to build background knowledge or set a scene for the reader, in regards to the topic.

Thesis Statement: A thesis statement usually appears at the beginning of the introductory paragraph of a paper, and it offers a concise summary of the student's main point or claim in the essay, research paper, etc. The thesis statement is developed, supported, and explained in the course of the paper by means of examples and evidence. Students can determine the strength of their thesis statement by asking the following:

- **Do I answer the question?** Re-reading the question prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.
- **Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?** If your thesis simply states facts that no one would, or even could, disagree with, it's possible that you are simply providing a summary, rather than making an argument.
- **Is my thesis statement specific enough?** Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful," see if you could be more specific: *why* is something "good"; *what specifically* makes something "successful"?
- **Does my thesis pass the "So what?" test?** If a reader's first response is, "So what?" then you need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue.
- **Does my essay support my thesis specifically and without wandering?** If your thesis and the body of your essay do not seem to go together, one of them has to change. It's okay to change your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of writing your paper. Remember, always reassess and revise your writing as necessary.
- **Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?** If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position right from the beginning.

Formal Style: When writing in a formal style, students need to be as thorough as possible and ensure that each point that is being made is introduced, elaborated, and concluded. Writing that adheres to a formal style will generally contain the following components:

- **Complex** – Longer sentences are likely to be more prevalent in formal writing. You need to be as thorough as possible with your approach to each topic when you are using a formal style. Each main point needs to be introduced, elaborated and concluded.
- **Objective** – State main points confidently and offer full support arguments. A formal writing style shows a limited range of emotions and avoids emotive punctuation such as exclamation points, ellipsis, etc., unless they are being cited from another source. (See objective tone for additional details)
- **Full Words** – No contractions should be used to simplify words (in other words use "It is" rather than "It's"). Abbreviations must be spelt out in full when first used, the only exceptions being when the acronym is better known than the full name (BBC, ITV or NATO for example).
- **Third Person** – Formal writing is not a personal writing style. The formal writer is disconnected from the topic and does not use the first person point of view (I or we) or second person (you).



Objective Tone: When using objective tone in writing, students present information in a neutral, factual and unbiased manner. To achieve an objective tone, students must avoid personal pronouns, judgemental words that indicate personal feelings, and emotive words that may indicate their opinions in regards to the selected topic. Additionally, to ensure objectivity, students may use the following appeals throughout their writings.

Conclusion (discussion - if long in length): A conclusion is closely related to the introduction. The conclusion summarises the major inferences that can be drawn from the information presented in the student's' written work. The conclusion / discussion usually adheres to the following format:

- It often begins by summarising (briefly) the main structure or scope of the paper. (This is not necessary if the paper follows a very predictable structure, such as the Methods, Results, Discussion structure of a scientific report).
- The conclusion then confirms the topic which was given in the introduction. Depending on what type of paper you are writing, this may take the form of the aims of the paper, a thesis statement (point of view) or a research question/hypothesis and its answer/outcome.
- The conclusion usually ends with a more general statement about how this topic relates to its context. This may take the form of an evaluation of the importance of the topic, implications for future research or a recommendation about theory or practice.

Transitions: A transition establishes logical connections between sentences, paragraphs, concepts, and sections of a student's work. Transitions allow students to convey information clearly and concisely. (See additional resources for a link to transitional words and phrases for effective writing.)

Here are some modifications for students who may experience difficulty or need extra support with the assignments.

These activities are to be used with each text and/or poem:

- Choose up to 3 activities to complete from the choice board (Complete one activity a day)
- After at least 2 readings of the text, choose up to 2 words to describe the main character (s). Provide at least one detail to support your choice.
- Write at least 1 or 2 questions you may have about the text.
- Write a short summary about the story, citing up to 2 supporting details
- Pick out one idea that stood out to you from the text and write a short summary about why this is important to you

More Online Resources for Additional Support:

World news for students

Link: <https://www.newsinlevels.com>

Video lessons and activities for learning English

Link: <http://www.usalearns.org>

Additional Online Resources:

The International Children's Library has a multicultural collection of free digital books.

Link: bit.ly/interchildlibrary

StoryWeaver has a collection of read along stories.

Link: bit.ly/StoryWeaver2020

The British Council's Learn English Kids website has stories, videos and games for English Learners.

Link: learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org

Cambridge has online activities for students learning English.

Link: bit.ly/CamEnglishActivities

The San Diego Zoo has online stories, videos, and activities.

Link: kids.sandiegozoo.org/stories

Colorín Colorado has many resources for parents.

Link: <https://www.colorincolorado.org/families>