

Contents

Introduction	4
Connections to the Common Core State Standards	12
Teaching Notes	13

Literature Passages

1. Medicine Walk • Adventure	26
2. Hakim's Workplace • Observational Narrative	28
3. The Steadfast Parrot • Folktale	30
4. Ethan Allen, Gentleman • Legend	32
5. Jake's Piers • Realistic Fiction	34
6. Use Your Head • Personal Narrative	36
7. Incident at Red Mountain • Nature Anecdote	38
8. Fireside Chats With FDR • Historical Fiction	40

Informational Text Passages

9. Squishy Foam • Procedural/Science Recipe	42
10. Please Re-Boot • Business Letter	44
11. Considering Competition • Cultural Essay	46
12. Backstage at Theater Camp • Friendly Letter	48
13. Tablet, Scroll, Text • Historical Essay	50
14. Lincoln: A Movie Review • Movie Review	52
15. Turning Point • Persuasive Essay	54
16. Who Influences Young People? • Persuasive Speech	56
17. Perk-Up! • Advertisement/Nutrition Label	58
18. GM0: Yes or No? • Technology Essay	60
19. Letter of Application • Personal Essay	62
20. Fine Art vs. Folk Art • Art Essay	64
21. Proposition 43 • Online Editorial	66
22. Launch, Circuit, Land • Biographical Sketch	68
23. Miracle on Ice • Sports History Article	70
24. El Sistema • Magazine Article	72
25. Eccentric Family Staycation • Science Essay	74
Answers	76

Connections to the Common Core State Standards

As shown in the chart below, the teaching resources in this book will help you meet many of the reading, writing, and language standards for grades 7–8 outlined in the CCSS. For details on these standards, visit the CCSS website: www.corestandards.org/the-standards/.

	Reading: Literature							Reading: Informational Text							Writing		Language						
Passage	RL.7/8.1	RL.7/8.2	RL.7/8.3	RL.7/8.4	RL.7/8.6	RL.7/8.9	RL.7/8.10	RI.7/8.1	RI.7/8.2	RI.7/8.3	RI.7/8.4	RI.7/8.5	RI.7/8.6	RI.7/8.8	RI.7/8.10	W.7/8.9	W.7/8.10	L.7/8.1	L.7/8.2	L.7/8.3	L.7/8.4	L.7/8.5	L.7/8.6
1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2	●	●	●	●	●		●									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3	●	●	●	●	●		●									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5	●	●	●	●	●		●									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6	●	●	●	●	●		●									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7	●	●	●	●	●		●									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9								●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13								●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
18								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
19								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
20								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
21								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
22								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
23								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
24								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
25								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Passage 1 Medicine Walk • page 26

Literature: Adventure

- **Focus** This story about preparing for a daunting rite of passage allows readers to connect with the emotions such an undertaking evokes in the teenage participants.

► Teaching Tips

Before Reading

- Talk about rites of passages in various cultures, including the nature of the challenge and the expectations for the participant.

During Reading

- Ask readers to envision themselves in Tyler's group as the medicine walk nears.
- Have students list character traits for Tyler and Mr. Melvin.

After Reading

- Challenge students to create a medicine walk journal that Tyler might keep during his time alone in the woods.

Common Core Connections

RL.7/8.1, RL.7/8.2, RL.7/8.3, RL.7/8.4, RL.7/8.6, RL.7/8.9, RL.7/8.10 • W.7/8.9, W.7/8.10 • L.7/8.1, L.7/8.2, L.7/8.3, L.7/8.4, L.7/8.5, L.7/8.6

Complexity Index

Quantitative:
Lexile 970

Qualitative	1	2	3	4	5
Meaning	✱				
Structure		✱			
Language		✱			
Knowledge		✱			

Reader & Task

- Students may be unfamiliar with the concept of a rite of passage.
- Challenge students to link the themes of this selection to examples of solitary rites of passage from childhood to young adulthood in fiction and nonfiction.

Passage 2 Hakim's Workplace • page 28

Literature: Observational Narrative

- **Focus** This narrative uses sensory details to create a lively setting. Readers must use clues to infer the setting and how Hakim functions within it.

► Teaching Tips

Before Reading

- Present visual images of commuters coming and going during a typical rush hour at an urban train station. Discuss the ambience of a rush-hour train station.

During Reading

- Have students circle challenging words or phrases, and jot down ideas or synonyms for them in the margins.
- Ask students to identify examples of alliteration and figurative language in the text.

After Reading

- Challenge students to create a sensory details table to use as a resource for writing their own observational narrative from the viewpoint of someone in the train station where Hakim works.

Common Core Connections

RL.7/8.1, RL.7/8.2, RL.7/8.3, RL.7/8.4, RL.7/8.6, RL.7/8.10 • W.7/8.9, W.7/8.10 • L.7/8.1, L.7/8.2, L.7/8.3, L.7/8.4, L.7/8.5, L.7/8.6

Complexity Index

Quantitative:
Lexile 980

Qualitative	1	2	3	4	5
Meaning		✱			
Structure	✱				
Language			✱		
Knowledge		✱			

Reader & Task

- Students may lack experience to envision the varied activity in a busy railway hub, airport concourse, or bus terminal.
- Have students generate a sensory details table, accounting for each of the five senses, for a busy public place, such as a school cafeteria, theater lobby, or sports stadium.

Passage 9

Squishy Foam • page 42

Informational Text: Procedural/Science Recipe

- **Focus** An example of easy kitchen chemistry, this recipe utilizes text elements (numbered list, subheadings, boxes, parentheses) to help students follow directions to create a new substance.

► **Teaching Tips****Before Reading**

- Discuss chemistry experiments students may have conducted or observed. Review common safety procedures and the importance of following directions accurately.

During Reading

- Read through the materials list together. Clarify the use of parentheses and the style of presenting measurement amounts.
- Have students annotate the steps in any way that would make them easier to follow.

After Reading

- Invite students to make this recipe at home. Discuss how to use proportional reasoning to revise the recipe to yield a smaller amount of squishy foam.

Common Core Connections

RI.7/8.1, RI.7/8.2, RI.7/8.3, RI.7/8.4, RI.7/8.5, RI.7/8.6, RI.7/8.10 • W.7/8.9, W.7/8.10 • L.7/8.1, L.7/8.2, L.7/8.3, L.7/8.4, L.7/8.5, L.7/8.6

Complexity Index**Quantitative:**

Lexile 990

Qualitative	1	2	3	4	5
Purpose	*				
Structure			*		
Language			*		
Knowledge			*		

Reader & Task

- Students may be unfamiliar with some materials, vocabulary, or procedures that are part of this project.
- Ask students to think about factors that make instructions easy to understand and follow. Does this recipe meet the criteria?

Passage 10

Please Re-Boot • page 44

Informational Text: Business Letter

- **Focus** This passage exemplifies a well-written letter of complaint, providing students with a model to discuss, analyze, and evaluate.

► **Teaching Tips****Before Reading**

- Review the typical elements of a business letter: inside address, date, salutation and closing; pertinent facts, clear and specific request, formal signature.

During Reading

- Ask readers to envision themselves in Raven's boots to grasp the situation.
- Have students indicate strong points, key facts, examples of a productive tone, and unnecessary details, if any.

After Reading

- Challenge students to write a response to Raven from a Customer Service person at Boot Warehouse.
- Have students write a letter of complaint about a product or service they have purchased.

Common Core Connections

RI.7/8.1, RI.7/8.2, RI.7/8.3, RI.7/8.4, RI.7/8.5, RI.7/8.6, RI.7/8.8, RI.7/8.10 • W.7/8.9, W.7/8.10 • L.7/8.1, L.7/8.2, L.7/8.3, L.7/8.4, L.7/8.5, L.7/8.6

Complexity Index**Quantitative:**

Lexile 1000

Qualitative	1	2	3	4	5
Purpose	*				
Structure			*		
Language			*		
Knowledge			*		

Reader & Task

- Students may be unfamiliar with the proper form, tone, and style of a business letter.
- Challenge students to evaluate the letter to identify its strengths and strategies.

Medicine Walk

What is the purpose of a medicine walk?

1 The daunting task jumbled Tyler's thoughts: *How could I spend 16 hours—*
2 *including overnight—alone in the wooded state park? What if I have no “mature*
3 *problem-solver” inside me? How will I succeed if I’m scared silly or worried whether*
4 *I’ll ever find my way back?*

5 But Tyler had no choice in this matter. Every young man in his family, as far
6 back as anyone could recall, had undertaken his own “medicine walk.” Each
7 boy more than survived the challenge; in fact, each recalled the demanding
8 experience with fierce pride and acknowledged how eye-opening it had been.
9 Tyler liked being on his own, but preferred the security of his cell phone or at
10 least a sturdy flashlight to solitary exploration.

11 Mr. Melvin served as Tyler's coach. He led a reluctant group of 13-year-olds
12 whose families wanted them to experience a medicine walk as an exercise in
13 self-reliance. “I did my own version of this when I was thirteen,” he shared. “My
14 folks called it a vision quest, but to me it began as aimless wandering. I was
15 allowed to bring very little with me, but I did carry the voices of the elders in my
16 head as I explored. As my medicine walk day went on, my own voice emerged,
17 and it served me well. My task today is to help you find your own inner strength
18 to accompany you on your journey.”

19 Tyler understood that people learn by experience, but feared that the
20 inexperienced couldn't possibly have the resources to extract themselves from a
21 tangle. The what-ifs tormented him; he fought back tears of shame for feeling
22 so frightened.

23 Mr. Melvin stayed calm and confident as a model to the boys. He prepared
24 the group by sharing maps of the area, which indicated clear boundaries
25 beyond which walkers could not go, and noted occasional trail markers that
26 would help orient the walkers. The group learned to identify animal tracks,
27 recognize edible plants, and build a quick and simple shelter. Mr. Melvin
28 also helped them discover ways to invite curiosity and wonder instead of fear
29 and doubt. Together they took group practice walks, each one a bit more
30 challenging than the previous one.

31 On the last meeting before the intimidating medicine walk, the group
32 held a candid question-and-answer session in which each participant was
33 encouraged to express his fears or concerns. Mr. Melvin modeled steady support
34 and patience, saying, “Remember, you're not crossing a storm-tossed ocean
35 on a rickety raft. You'll be in a limited area for a fixed period of time. You will
36 begin as a group at 9:00 Saturday morning. Then you'll separate and explore
37 anywhere inside the designated area. You will spend the night wherever
38 you choose, in a shelter you will make, eating the food you bring with you,
39 and drinking fresh water you collect from the creek. You'll be free with your
40 thoughts and dreams. We'll reunite at 1:00 P.M. Sunday, exactly where we
41 began. Any questions?”

Medicine Walk

► Answer each question. Give evidence from the adventure.

1 Why was Tyler on the verge of crying (lines 21–22)?

- ☐ A. He lacked experience being on his own.
- ☐ B. He felt forced into making a medicine walk.
- ☐ C. He was embarrassed that it was his first medicine walk.
- ☐ D. He felt ashamed for feeling so fearful.

What evidence in the text helped you answer? _____

2 What makes Mr. Melvin an ideal coach for Tyler and the group? _____

3 Describe the nature of a medicine walk and its overarching purpose. _____

4 Why is *mature problem-solver* (lines 2 and 3) within quotation marks? _____

5 What word in this passage could be synonymous with *daunting* (line 1)? Explain. _____

6 How would you describe Mr. Melvin's approach to preparing the boys for their medicine walk?

Hakim's Workplace

In what ways does Hakim broaden his perspective as he works?

1 Hakim spent much of his day looking down, attending to his job. He wore
2 a thick denim apron over a T-shirt and sturdy work pants. His right hand was
3 enclosed in a close-fitting black leather glove. On his left, he sported a lighter
4 glove, which at the moment clasped a spray bottle, a key tool of his trade.
5 Within easy reach rested a weathered wooden box containing brushes, tins of
6 polish, applicators, rags, and shine-cloths.

7 The bustle that went on around Hakim entered his consciousness auditorily.
8 He experienced his surroundings through the announcements of arrivals and
9 departures, the prattling of passersby, the rumblings of rolling suitcases. But
10 when he straightened up and looked about he saw essentially the same thing
11 each day: people walking briskly to the trains or coming, more casually, from
12 them. He glimpsed them hustling along alone, speaking into their cell phones,
13 or carrying coffee in one hand, a briefcase in the other. He noticed pairs chatting
14 enthusiastically, their reunions or impromptu business conferences already
15 underway. He spied bewildered families, unused to chaos, drifting in anxious
16 crowds. Yes, he observed basically the same things, even some of the same
17 people, every day. They all belonged here; it all made sense. When something
18 broke the usual rhythms, even slightly, it engaged him.

19 That's what happened this morning when Hakim stood up and stretched his
20 weary back and stiff shoulders. He spotted two yipping teenage girls in purple
21 jeans racing toward the concourse. A few steps behind them scurried a frazzled
22 woman, struggling to keep her balance in too-high heels. Trailing just behind
23 her a young boy dragged a tortoise-shaped rolling backpack, trying doggedly
24 to keep it upright and keep pace with the woman. *Why all the fuss and bother?*
25 Hakim thought, smiling inwardly. *Are these people together or merely a random*
26 *collection of travelers in a rush?* Hakim didn't bother to answer, but pivoted slowly,
27 bent down, and resumed the task before him: breathing new life into a scuffed
28 and neglected pair of mahogany oxfords.



Hakim's Workplace

► Answer each question. Give evidence from the narrative.

- 1 Which of these words from the narrative is an example of onomatopoeia?
☐ A. clasped (line 4) ☐ B. auditorily (line 7) ☐ C. rhythms (line 18) ☐ D. yipping (line 20)

How did you determine your response? _____

- 2 What is Hakim's job and where does he work? _____

- 3 In line 17, the author writes, "They all belonged here; it all made sense." How does this sentence capture the setting of the narrative?

- 4 Hakim experiences his environment *auditorily* (line 7). Explain what this means. _____

- 5 Describe Hakim's attitude toward his surroundings. _____

- 6 Suggest a possible explanation to link the yipping teens, the frazzled woman, and the young boy dragging a backpack (lines 20–24).

Squishy Foam

How is the data provided for the recipe organized in a useful way?

Make-at-Home Squishy Foam

Be a confident kitchen chemist and cause a controlled chemical reaction to create a sticky but flexible molding substance.

Materials

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sodium borate (borax)
- 3 cups cold water
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups white liquid glue
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cold water
- Food coloring
- 8 cups 3mm-polystyrene beads
- 4-gallon plastic bag (wastebasket liner size)

Tools

- rubber gloves
- assorted measuring cups
- 2 glass mixing bowls
- 2 wooden mixing spoons

Steps

1. Wear rubber gloves to protect both hands. Do not remove them until you have finished making the foam.
2. In a small bowl, mix the borax into 3 cups of water. Stir carefully with one of the spoons until the borax is completely dissolved.
3. In the other small bowl, combine the white glue with $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of water. Using the other spoon, mix until thoroughly blended. Then add food coloring, drop-by-drop, to the diluted glue to create your desired color. Mix completely.
4. Pour the glue solution into the plastic bag, then add the polystyrene beads. Next, add the borax solution.
5. Holding the bag by its sides and bottom, knead together the ingredients until they transform into a gummy, viscous foam. (The borax and the polyvinyl acetate molecules in the glue cause a chemical reaction, creating an entirely new substance—a malleable polymer foam.)
6. Remove the newly-created foam from the bag. Next, mold it into anything you like, allowing it to air-dry and harden completely when you are done. Alternatively, you can seal your squishy foam in a plastic bag and refrigerate it for use at a later time; it will remain flexible and mold-free for several days.

Squishy Foam

► Answer each question. Give evidence from the science recipe.

1 Assuming one follows the directions accurately, a “controlled chemical reaction” (line 2) is most likely to be _____.

- ☐ A. challenging ☐ B. explosive ☐ C. harmless ☐ D. flexible

What evidence in the text helped you answer? _____

2 What material in the recipe is used to dilute the white glue? Explain. _____

3 Why are the steps numbered, but the materials and tools lists are not? _____

4 Name two common substances that have a *viscous* (line 23) consistency. Consult a dictionary, as needed.

5 Step 5 has a sentence set within parentheses. Why did the writer do that? _____

6 Speculate why the author specifies using glass bowls and wooden spoons rather than bowls or spoons made of any other materials.
