



SAMPLES OF STANDARDS STUDENTS ARE LEARNING THIS NINE WEEKS:

7th Grade ELA

STANDARDS: RL.7.2, RL.7.4, RL.7.6, RI.7.2, RI.7.3, RI.7.4, W.7.2

RL.7.2

Do you know the story of Spider-Man? After Peter Parker is bitten by a mutant spider, he mostly goofs around with his new powers. He doesn't capture criminals; in fact, he lets one go. But this bad decision teaches Peter an important lesson: With great power comes great responsibility. In other words, if you're Spider-Man, you owe it to the world to use your powers to help others. This is a major **theme**, or lesson, of the Spider-Man comics.

Look at the picture below. What lesson, or theme, does the picture seem to convey?



Before you can describe the theme of a picture or story, you must first understand its central idea. The **central idea** is what a picture or story is mainly about.

In the chart below, write two details from the picture that support its central idea.

Central Idea		
The boy practiced soccer every day and became the "Most Improved Player."		
Detail	Detail	Detail
Used to be worst on the team		

Based on the chart, describe a general lesson the reader might learn from the picture.

While reading, ask yourself: What lesson is the author trying to tell the reader? What details does the author use to tell it? If you can ask and answer such questions, you'll succeed in the "great responsibility" of better understanding what you read.

RL.7.4

Read the beginning of a poem that describes the speaker's view of London as viewed from a bridge.

Genre: Lyric Poem

Composed Upon Westminster Bridge by William Wordsworth

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

(continued)

Explore how to answer this question: "How does the speaker use figurative language to make comparisons, and what is the effect?"

Think about what connection the speaker makes between a garment (a piece of clothing) and the beauty of the morning. What do these two unlike things have in common? Also think about how the speaker personifies the city, or gives it human-like qualities.

Use what you know about figurative language to complete the chart below.

Example	What Is Compared	Effect of Comparison
"This City now doth, like a garment, wear The beauty of the morning;"	a garment (a piece of clothing) and the beauty of the morning	The city is like a person who is wearing a lovely piece of clothing, one that is fresh and glittering and golden.

On the lines below, explain what the speaker's use of language tells you about his feelings for the city. Support your ideas with specific details from the poem.

Responses will vary.

RI.7.3:

Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

On the Roof of the World

by Benjamin Koch

A few summers ago, I was lucky to travel to Tibet, the "roof of the world." Tibet is a

small country surrounded on all sides by gigantic snowy mountain peaks. For thousands of years, these towering mountains acted like a fence, keeping people from entering the country. That's one reason why explorers and writers have called Tibet the roof of the world. It's hard to get to. The other reason is Tibet's high elevation. When I climbed mountain passes over 17,000 feet above sea level, I gasped for air. I was more than three miles high!

Years ago, the people of Tibet were nomads—people without permanent homes. The ground in Tibet is much too rocky and thin to grow crops, so Tibetans centered their daily life and survival on the yak. The yaks provided the nomads with nearly everything they needed—milk, butter, meat, and wool for clothes and ropes. Even yak dung was used for fires.

Tibetan nomads would lead their herds of yak and sheep across pastures, valleys, and mountainsides in search of the best grazing lands. They did not live in permanent homes made of wood, brick, or stone.

Times are changing in Tibet, and more and more people live and work in villages and cities. But there are still nomads who survive on the high plateau just as their ancestors did.

Becoming a Modern Nomad

Some friends and I were traveling with our teacher, Dudjom Dorjee, to Kham, in the eastern part of Tibet. Dudjom was born in Tibet and lived the first years of his life as a traditional nomad. Because of political problems, Dudjom's family had to flee to India when he was still young. We were following Dudjom back to his birthplace and getting a taste of that ancient, nomadic way of life—with a few modern updates.

We had the advantage of automobiles—a luxury that nomads have happily survived without. When it comes time for a nomad family to move, they pack all their things into large backpacks that they strap over their yaks. A typical family might need from 30 to 50 yaks to carry all their supplies. My friends and I had more than 50 bags to carry. We stuffed them into a bus, while we piled into four-wheel drives.

Problems Along the Way

When it comes to crossing rough country, yaks are the true all-terrain travelers. Many times, the nomads have to cross raging rivers. For the loyal and determined yaks, crossing is not a problem. But when we had to cross a river, our four-wheel drives turned out to be not so loyal and reliable. We got stuck in the muddy banks of the river, and it took at least a dozen people pushing to get us out.

When nomads arrive at their destination, they are so skilled at setting up their large yak-hair tents that they have them up in minutes. My friends and I, with our fancy supermodern tents, weren't quite as quick. At one campsite, I remember wrestling with one of my tent poles trying to pass it through the loops of my tent. Some smiling nomad

kids approached and had me set up in no time, though they'd never seen a tent like that before.

It's Cold Up There!

The weather in Tibet is cold, and the brutal wind seems to show no mercy. Sitting inside a nomad tent, though, you'd never know it. With a warm fire burning in the mud stove and the snug black walls of the tent, you are as comfortable as can be. This was not the case in the fancy modern tents my friends and I slept in. I remember shivering through my four sweaters, three pairs of pants, and blanket, listening to the chill rain hit my tent.

Having the Right Attitude

On this trip, I learned that it takes much more than snug tents and thick, hearty tea to survive. You need the right attitude. Everywhere we traveled, the Tibetans were generous, happy, and curious. It might be a monk warming my frozen hands in his fur robes. It might be a family of nomads taking a break to dance and sing in a circle, or a handful of kids watching me with beaming smiles.

Though their lives are full of challenges, the nomads never take their day-to-day problems too seriously. They know how impermanent things are, including their homes. We modern nomads learned some of these lessons. Perhaps when we cross the raging rivers or face the cold bitter days of our lives, we'll do it with a lot more of the right attitude—the same attitude that shines from the bright smiles of the Tibetan nomads.

Why did the author and his friends choose to travel with Dudjom Dorjee?

- A. because he could show them the nomadic life he had lived in Tibet
- B. because he was friends with many of the local Tibetans
- C. because he could teach them to communicate with the nomads
- D. because he could show them how to avoid traveling difficulties

Rationale: CHOICE "A" IS CORRECT:

A student selecting "A" shows an understanding of how an interaction between individuals fits into the article. Arriving at an accurate conclusion involves understanding the information the author presents about Dudjom Dorjee and making a valid inference about what motivation the author and his friends would have to travel with him. The reader learns that they wish to get a "taste of that ancient, nomadic way of life." The author and his friends see the opportunity to travel with their teacher as a chance to witness a way of life that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

RI.7.4:

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

What does the author mean by describing yaks as "true all-terrain travelers"?

- A. The yaks are not afraid of rough country.
- B. The yaks are very gentle and good-natured.

- C. The yaks manage Tibet's geographic obstacles very well.
- D. The yaks provide everything the Tibetan nomads need.

Rationale: CHOICE "C" IS CORRECT:

A student selecting "C" shows an accurate understanding of what a metaphorical phrase means in the context of the article. "True all-terrain travelers" suggests that the yaks are well-adapted to the challenges of all landscapes in Tibet like an "all-terrain" vehicle and that the yaks greatly expedite travel for the Tibetans who use them. The use of "true" suggests that absolutely nothing the geography of Tibet has to offer daunts these intrepid creatures, making yaks possibly a "truer" "all-terrain" vehicle than actual all-terrain vehicles themselves would be in this environment.

RI.7.3:

Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

Why does the author include the story about his trouble setting up a tent?

- A. to explain why he wished he had bought a better tent
- B. to demonstrate the difficulty of working in the harsh climate
- C. to show why he would have preferred a Tibetan yak-hair tent
- D. to provide an example of the abilities and generosity of young Tibetans

Rationale: CHOICE "D" IS CORRECT:

A student choosing "D" shows an understanding of how an example illustrating an interaction among individuals supports the central ideas of an article. The example that describes the Tibetan children helping the author set up his tent, a tent the children have never seen before, illustrates the abilities and the generosity of the young Tibetans. The example of this interaction serves the goal of illustrating reasons for the author's overall admiration of the Tibetans, a central idea of the article.

RI.7.2:

Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

Which of these is the **best** summary of this article?

- A. On his travels to Tibet, the author found that although many Tibetan people have moved to cities, there are still those who prefer the nomadic life. They do not live in permanent homes but instead move around in this three-mile high country. Their yak-hair tents provide greater warmth than the author's modern tents.
- B. As the author learned during his visit to Tibet, Tibetan weather is harsh. However, the Tibetan nomads continue to follow the old ways, raising yaks for all of their survival needs. During their moves from place to place, they often have to cross difficult rivers and rough terrain. Nevertheless, they maintain a wonderful attitude about life.
- C. When the author traveled with friends to Tibet, he learned that many Tibetans continue to live as nomads. They follow the old customs of raising yaks, which help the nomads move from place to place as well as provide for their basic needs.

Though the lives of the nomads present many difficulties, they have developed happy attitudes that suit their lives.

- D. Traveling in Tibet, the author saw that Tibetan nomads have learned to depend on the yaks for survival. They get food, clothing, shelter, and even warmth from the animals, which are extremely good natured. The author refers to them as “all-terrain vehicles” for their ability to cross any river without problem. In one situation, the yaks proved to be more dependable than automobiles.

Rationale: CHOICE “C” IS CORRECT:

A student choosing “C” shows an ability to select an objective summary that emphasizes the most important information in the article, organizes the information appropriately, and avoids unnecessary information. “C” describes the major components of the article: the author’s travels to Tibet and participation in—and observation of—nomadic life. Yaks, a central aspect of the article, are also mentioned. The answer is completed with an inclusive conclusion. No evaluation of the article is presented, and no major information is omitted. The summary gives appropriate space to the key points without mentioning less-important details.

RL.7.6

Roller coasters aren’t for everyone. You might love the thrills, but your friend keeps her eyes closed the whole time! Each of you has your own perspective, or **point of view**, about the experience.

Stories contain different points of view, too. Sometimes you’ll get the point of view of the narrator, or the voice telling the story. At other times you’ll get the point of view of one or more characters. By revealing their words, thoughts, feelings, and actions, the author gives you insight into the characters’ attitudes about the events and people around them.

Who are the main characters in the scene below? How would the description of the same event differ if it were told from each character’s point of view?



Read the chart below. Note how the evidence shows why a contrast exists between the acrobat’s point of view about the situation and the audience member’s perspective.

Character	Evidence	Point of View
Acrobat	says next trick will be tough; walking a high tightrope	The routine is very dangerous, and he could fall at any minute.
Audience Member	smiling, eyes wide, says acrobat makes it look easy	The acrobat seems very talented, and he’s in no danger.

The characters in the scene are having two different experiences and would tell different versions of the same story. In other words, *how* an event is described is directly affected by *who* is describing it. So by carefully choosing or describing points of view, the author is able to advance the plot and help readers understand the characters’ actions and motivations.

