



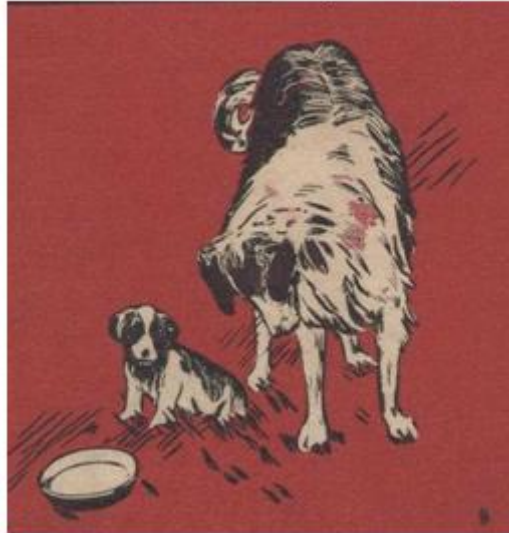
SAMPLES OF STANDARDS STUDENTS ARE LEARNING THIS NINE WEEKS:

8th Grade ELA

STANDARDS: RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, RL.8.6, W.8.9

8th Grade Reading: Literature

Story: An Excerpt from A Dog's Tale by Mark Twain



My father was a St. Bernard, my mother was a collie, but I am a Presbyterian. This is what my mother told me, I do not know these nice distinctions myself. To me they are only fine large words meaning nothing. My mother had a fondness for such; she liked to say them, and see other dogs look surprised and envious, as wondering how she got so much education. But, indeed, it was not real education; it was only show: she got the words by listening in the dining-room and drawing-room when there was company, and by going with the children to Sunday-school and listening there; and whenever she heard a large word she said it over to herself many times, and so was able to keep it until there was a dogmatic gathering in the neighborhood, then she would get it off, and surprise and distress them all, from pocket-pup to mastiff, which rewarded her for all her trouble. If there was a stranger he was nearly sure to be suspicious, and when he got his breath again he would ask her what it meant. And she always told him. He was never expecting this but thought he would catch her; so when she told him, he was the one that looked ashamed, whereas he had thought it was going to be she. The others were always waiting for this, and glad of it and proud of her, for they knew what was going to

happen, because they had had experience. When she told the meaning of a big word they were all so taken up with admiration that it never occurred to any dog to doubt if it was the right one; and that was natural, because, for one thing, she answered up so promptly that it seemed like a dictionary speaking, and for another thing, where could they find out whether it was right or not? for she was the only cultivated dog there was. By and by, when I was older, she brought home the word Unintellectual, one time, and worked it pretty hard all the week at different gatherings, making much unhappiness and despondency; and it was at this time that I noticed that during that week she was asked for the meaning at eight different assemblages, and flashed out a fresh definition every time, which showed me that she had more presence of mind than culture, though I said nothing, of course. She had one word which she always kept on hand, and ready, like a life-preserver, a kind of emergency word to strap on when she was likely to get washed overboard in a sudden way—that was the word Synonymous. When she happened to fetch out a long word which had had its day weeks before and its prepared meanings gone to her dump-pile, if there was a stranger there of course it knocked him groggy for a couple of minutes, then he would come to, and by that time she would be away down wind on another tack, and not expecting anything; so when he'd hail and ask her to cash in, I (the only dog on the inside of her game) could see her canvas flicker a moment— but only just a moment—then it would belly out taut and full, and she would say, as calm as a summer's day, "It's synonymous with supererogation," or some godless long reptile of a word like that, and go placidly about and skim away on the next tack, perfectly comfortable, you know, and leave that stranger looking profane and embarrassed, and the initiated slatting the floor with their tails in unison and their faces transfigured with a holy joy.

CCSS.RL.8.1

- What is the narrator's mother?
 - a. A German Shepard
 - b. A Presbyterian
 - c. A St. Bernard
 - d. A collie

Answer: d

CCSS.RL.8.2

- Of the choices below, which is the best theme for this excerpt?
 - a. Sometimes one needs to fake it to make it
 - b. Dogs are very intelligent
 - c. One should be ashamed of one's education if it does not come in a traditional sense
 - d. Words have life

Answer: a

CCSS.RL.8.3

- How does the quote “But, indeed, it was not real education; it was only show: she got the words by listening in the dining-room and drawing-room when there was company, and by going with the children to Sunday-school and listening there” reveal something new about a character?
 - a. It reveals that the narrator was not as educated as he previously seemed.
 - b. It reveals that the narrator’s father was educated by listening to humans, and not through any formal education.
 - c. It reveals that the narrator’s mother was educated by listening to humans, and not through any formal education.
 - d. It reveals that the narrator was educated by listening to humans, and not through any formal education.

Answer: c

- What does the quote, “When she happened to fetch out a long word which had had its day weeks before and its prepared meanings gone to her dump-pile, if there was a stranger there of course it knocked him groggy for a couple of minutes, then he would come to, and by that time she would be away downwind on another tack, and not expecting anything; so when he’d hail and ask her to cash in, I (the only dog on the inside of her game) could see her canvas flicker a moment— but only just a moment—then it would belly out taut and full, and she would say, as calm as a summer’s day, ‘It’s synonymous with supererogation,’ or some godless long reptile of a word like that,” reveal about the narrator’s mother?
 - a. It reveals that the mother is always has to be exactly correct, or she will shut down.
 - b. It reveals that the mother is always prepared to talk about definitions of words, even if she doesn’t remember the true definition.
 - c. It reveals that the mother is a cheat.
 - d. It reveals nothing about the mother.

Answer: b

CCSS.RL.8.4

- What does “these nice distinctions” mean in the second sentence?
 - a. It means distinctions with a friendly disposition
 - b. It means the similarities between the members of the family
 - c. It means the differences between friendly and unfriendly dogs
 - d. It means the differences between the classifications of dogs in the family

Answer: d

CCSS.RL.8.6

- Which of the following is an example of suspense in the excerpt?
 - a. “...then he would come to, and by that time she would be away downwind on another tack, and not expecting anything...”
 - b. “...the initiated slatting the floor with their tails in unison and their faces transfigured with a holy joy.”
 - c. “This is what my mother told me, I do not know these nice distinctions myself.”
 - d. “When she told the meaning of a big word they were all so taken up with admiration that it never occurred to any dog to doubt if it was the right one...”

Answer: a

W.8.9

Point Counterpoint

For Kyle, the best part about visiting his grandparents by himself was the silence. There were no nosy little sisters or nagging parents, no barking dogs, nobody pestering him to take out the trash or mow the lawn. Kyle’s grandparents lived on a quiet cul-de-sac at the rear of a retirement village three hours away from his hometown, and every single second spent in the car, passing through endless fields, drowned in easy-listening radio stations, was worth it.

Across the kitchen table, Kyle’s grandfather was lost in concentration as he studied the little plastic tiles set before him. Tile-Smarts was the game of choice at his grandparents’ house, followed closely by Spell-a-Grams and an endless assortment of card games. Kyle was pretty sure that his grandfather had never let him win a game, but his grandma was a soft touch.

A soft buzz rumbled from Kyle's waistband. He winced. He should have left his phone in the guest bedroom before sitting down to play. He surreptitiously inched his right hand under the table and clenched tense fingers around the shape of the phone on its belt clip. It was probably just a text from Eddie, wondering if Kyle would be back in time for the annual 4th of July campout. But maybe it was Molly, the girl he'd met at the skate park the week before he headed to his grandparents' house. She promised to text the next time she went boarding—she was going to teach him a new jump. He should probably return her text so she wouldn't think he was avoiding her.

Kyle looked up and caught his grandfather's narrowed eye. Nope. He was not going to bring out the phone and have to listen to yet another lecture about being present in the present. The text could wait.

"You can look at it," his grandfather said, laying three high-value tiles in the center of the game board. "I don't mind."

His grandfather actually owned a cell phone, but he only carried it when he was driving, and even then it never left the confining safety of the glove box. "Who am I going to talk to?" he always asked, throwing his hands up in the air. "If I'm not at home, I don't want to talk to you. Leave me a message. Send me a letter. Or, even better, talk to me in person." So Kyle knew that picking up the phone would begin a cascade of problems that he wasn't able to solve.

Kyle shrugged and shook his head as he placed four of his own tiles next to his grandfather's. He removed four more tiles from a small brown bag and set them on his rack. "It's not a big deal," he said easily.

"It's too bad you can't just shut off that thing," his grandfather said, peering over his glasses at the tiles already on the table.

Kyle stifled a sigh. He hadn't even looked at the phone and he was still going to get a monologue. And it was the same monologue every single time. Your friends should know better than to interrupt when you're with family, nobody is more important than the person you're actually with, and Kyle's least favorite, you all spend too much time poking your nose into other people's business. It took considerable effort, but Kyle was proud to say that he'd never given in to his grandfather's incessant needling. He knew his grandpa meant well, and he didn't want to be disrespectful by challenging everything the man said. His grandpa was a good guy—so what if they had a difference of opinion?

"The thing I don't get," his grandfather continued, apparently content with carrying on the conversation all by himself, "is why you kids are always putting all of your business on the Internet. Nobody needs to know what you're having for breakfast or what song you're listening to or why you hate such-and-such TV show."

Kyle held back a grin. "Have you been on my Look-Me-Up page, Grandpa?"

"Of course I have!" His grandfather looked annoyed. "It's not like you write to tell me how you're doing, so I have to wade through all of this teenage nonsense to find out whether you won your last ball game. You could call me once in awhile," he said pointedly.

Kyle would have rolled his eyes if he'd been having this conversation with his sister, but instead he laid both palms flat on the table and took a deep breath. This topic would keep resurfacing if he didn't gather up his courage and take a stand. He wasn't looking to start a fight with his grandpa—he was going to have a respectful, adult conversation about a topic he felt strongly about.

"I like being connected to all of my friends all of the time," Kyle began, pushing his rack of tiles to the side. "I like knowing that I can text Eddie a question about our math homework without having to worry about waking his baby sister. I like being able to get in touch with Mom or Dad to let them know baseball practice ran late. And I like being able to see what's new and important in my friends' lives."

"But can't you just ask them? Can't you have an actual conversation face-to-face with another human being?" Kyle's grandfather asked staunchly.

"No disrespect, Grandpa, but I only get to spend time with my friends a few hours a week. Sure, we go to school together, but it's impossible to catch up during the four minutes we have between classes. And then after school I have baseball practice, art class, piano lessons, homework... there's just no time. It's easier for me to talk to him over the Internet—calling that way is cheaper, anyway."

Kyle's grandfather frowned for a moment before picking up the bag of surplus tiles. "Your mom has you in too many activities," he said gruffly, dragging two new tiles onto his rack.

"I chose them," Kyle countered, pulling his rack back into position. "It's not ideal, but sometimes texting and Look-Me-Up are the only way I can connect with my friends."

His grandfather let out a small snort of disbelief and stood from the table. "C'mon, your grandmother will be home soon," he said. "Let's get dinner started. I'm famished."

Kyle got up to wash his hands, secretly pleased at his success in respectfully standing his ground in a debate with an elder. But on the way back to the kitchen, he paused in front of the guest room and tossed his cell phone onto the bed. He didn't check his texts.

Student Directions:

In "Point Counterpoint," Kyle and his grandfather have a lively discussion about whether modern technology such as cell phones, text messaging, and the Internet are a benefit or a hindrance to people's lives. But what

does the research say about the effect of these technologies on people’s lives? In this task, you will conduct research into a study that has been conducted on the effect of one of these technologies. You will write a response that relates this research study to the points of view of Kyle or his grandfather.

Part 1:

Begin by reviewing “Point Counterpoint” and jotting down the technologies discussed in the story as well as some of the arguments made about their benefits and drawbacks. Select one of these technologies and related arguments to investigate further. Write down a question that you would like to find the answer to in your investigation of research studies.

Part 2:

Conduct research online, using a school-based tool, into studies that have been conducted on the question you raised. Select key words to help you narrow your research. For example, if your research question is “Do people who use social media have closer friendships?” then you might search using the key words social media, friendship, and study.

Once you have found a study that answers your question, or answers a related question that interests you, write down the source of the study, how it was conducted, what question it will answer, and the results of the study.

Part 3:

Write a response of one to two paragraphs comparing the results of the study to the views of the characters in “Point Counterpoint.” Explain whether the results support the view of Kyle, his grandfather, or neither. You might also include any counterarguments that either Kyle or his grandfather might make after they read the study.

Scoring:

Your performance will be scored based on the following:

- You asked a research question related to the ideas about technology discussed in the story.
- You accurately reported on a research study that sought to answer questions about the technology you selected.
- You thoughtfully compared the results of the research study to the arguments made by the characters in the story.

