



7th/8th Grade English

Curriculum Sample

A Grade Ahead's rigorous, year-round English enrichment program is designed to challenge your child to a higher academic standard. Our monthly curriculum includes topics that your child will see in his or her English or Language Arts classes. Your child will build grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills and develop strong critical thinking and analytical skills.

Each week will have an in-depth lesson (which we call Examples), homework, and answers. In these next pages, we offer a closer look at what our Examples, homework, and answers offer as well as a specific example of each.

Examples - Grades - 7-8

Vocabulary

1. banish	(v.)	to forbid someone or something from being in a certain place; to exile someone (often as punishment)
2. cease	(v.)	to stop; to end
3. compulsion	(n.)	a force or desire to do something against one's will or normal behavior
4. congregate	(v.)	to gather in a group
5. connoisseur	(n.)	someone who is very knowledgeable and fond of a particular subject (usually an art)
6. engage	(v.)	to participate; to occupy one's attention
7. enthrall	(v.)	to fascinate or charm; to hold as if spellbound
8. insulate	(v.)	to separate and protect one thing from another
9. linger	(v.)	to pause in a place as if reluctant to leave (but with no other reason to stay)
10. sentimental	(adj.)	having emotional appeal

B. Comprehension

Science Fiction

This genre is difficult to define because so many science fiction stories can also be considered other genres, such as mystery, legends, or horror. The key difference to remember is that these stories usually couldn't happen in the world we know, but the possibility is presented based on some innovation in science or technology, and they often take place in the future. As with most fiction, these stories are written to entertain. Sometimes, however, they also present a warning about what can happen if science is misused.

Note: Science fiction is different from other genres because it deals with events and settings which are imaginary, but still plausible. Older science fiction pieces can be harder to identify because innovations in technology may have made the author's imagined technology real. For example, when Jules Verne's Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea was written, advanced submarines like the ones in the book didn't exist.

H.G. Wells' The War of the Worlds describes the invasion of Earth by tripod fighting machines.

- Student Goals:**
- ✓ I will be able to identify writing in the science fiction genre.
 - ✓ I will be able to discern helping verbs from linking verbs.
 - ✓ I will correctly identify transitive and intransitive verbs and direct objects.

Student Goals

Student goals are listed at the top right of the Examples each week. These are topics that your child should understand by the end of the week.



Lesson pages are titled "Examples – Grades – 7-8," answer pages are titled "Answers – Grades 7-8," and homework pages are simply titled "Grades – 7-8."

Examples - Grades - 7-8

A. Vocabulary

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Example: *The War of the Worlds* describes an alien invasion from Mars in 1908.

Vocabulary Word List

Your child will receive a vocabulary list for the week. Depending on the grade level, these words may be words that are difficult to spell, or they may not know the meaning of the word yet.

Examples - Grades - 7-8

Grammar

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Teaching Tip: For transitive versus intransitive, emphasize student participation in identifying types of verbs to increase practice and experience.

Action verbs must either be transitive or intransitive. Transitive verbs must have a direct object, while intransitive verbs do not have a direct object. The **direct object** answers the question "who" or "what" and receives the action of the verb. Direct objects are always nouns or pronouns (or phrases or clauses that act as a noun!)

Note: To determine if a verb is transitive, follow these steps:
 (1) Identify the verb and the subject.
 (2) Ask yourself, "Who or what did the subject (verb)?" If there is an answer, it is transitive, otherwise the verb is intransitive.

The subject is the noun that is doing the action of a sentence.

Example: The teacher called the student.
 The verb is "call" and the subject is "the teacher." Ask the question "who" or "what" did the teacher call? If there is an answer, then there is a direct object.
 Since "the student" answers the question "who," it is the direct object.
 Because this sentence has a direct object, the verb "call" is TRANSITIVE.

Example: The train arrived four hours late.
 The verb is "arrived" and the subject is "the train." Ask the question "who" or "what" did the train arrive? If there is an answer, then there is a direct object.
 Since the "four hours late" does not answer either "who" or "what," then it is not the direct object. Because this sentence has no direct object, the verb "arrived" is INTRANSITIVE.

Note: Some verbs can be transitive or intransitive. This is called a **ditransitive verb**.
 Example: She placed the book on the table.

Teaching Tip

Teaching tips are suggestions to help you or your teacher present the topic to your child. These could include topics to review first or even an activity to do with your child.

Summary

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs



Teaching Tip: For transitive versus intransitive, emphasize student participation in identifying types of verbs to increase practice and experience.

Action verbs must either be transitive or intransitive. Transitive verbs must have a direct object, while intransitive verbs do not have a direct object. The **direct object** answers the question "who" or "what" and receives the action of the verb. Direct objects are always nouns or pronouns (or phrases or clauses that act as a noun!)



Note: To determine if a verb is transitive, follow these steps:

- (1) Identify the verb and the subject.
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A B C

The subject is the noun that is doing the action of a sentence.

Example: The teacher called the student.

The verb is "call" and the subject is "the teacher." Ask the question "who" or "what" did the teacher call? If there is an answer, then there is a direct object.

Since "the student" answers the question "who," it is the direct object. Because this sentence has a direct object, the verb "call" is TRANSITIVE.



Example: The train arrived four hours late.

The verb is "arrived" and the subject is "the train." Ask the question "who" or "what" did the train arrive? If there is an answer, then there is a direct object.

Since the "four hours late" does not answer either "who" or "what," then it is not the direct object. Because this sentence has no direct object, the verb "arrived" is INTRANSITIVE.

Depending on the sentence, some verbs can be transitive or intransitive. This is called

Example: Please leave your book on the table.



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Example: The teacher called the student.

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Since "the student" answers the question "who," it is the direct object.



Example: The train arrived four hours late.

The verb is "arrived" and the subject is "the train." Ask the question "who" or "what" did the train arrive? If there is an answer, then there is a direct object.

Since the "four hours late" does not answer either "who" or "what," then it is not the direct object. Because this sentence has no direct object, the verb "arrived" is INTRANSITIVE.

Depending on the sentence, some verbs can be transitive or intransitive. This is called



Example: Please leave your book on the table.

The verb is "leave" and the subject is "you (implied)." Ask the question "who" or "what" did you leave? If there is an answer, then there is a direct object.

Since "your book" answers the question, then it is a direct object, and the verb "leave" is TRANSITIVE.



Example: Please leave quietly.

The verb is "leave" and the subject is "you." Ask the question "who" or "what" did you leave? Since "quietly" does not answer either question, then it is not the direct object, and the verb "leave" is INTRANSITIVE.

ABC Word Boxes

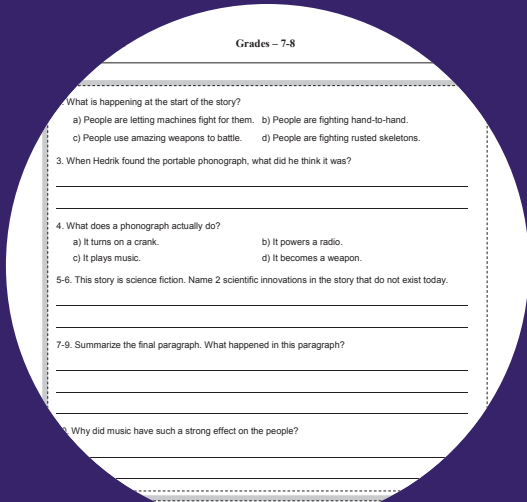
These word boxes define terms used within the lesson that your child may not know.

Examples

To illustrate the topic, examples are provided to you and your child. These examples help demonstrate how to solve the problem or figure out the answer.

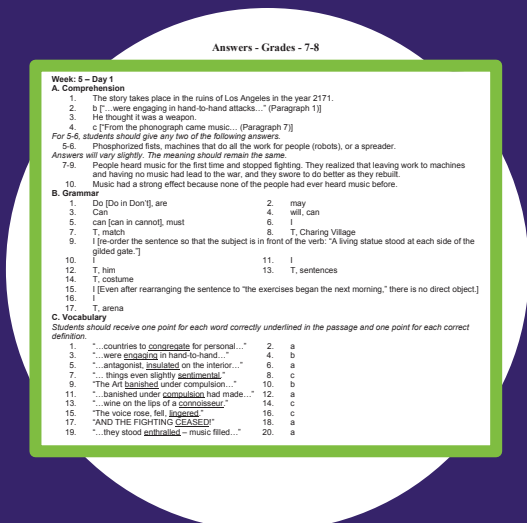


Each day's homework usually takes about 30 minutes to complete.



Homework

Each week, four days of homework are given to apply concepts from that week's lesson and reinforce the topic.



Answers


Answers are provided to check your child's homework. Enter the scores into the Parent Portal to track progress and note which areas may need more work.

A. Vocabulary

1. amble		to walk slow and easy; to stroll slowly
2. antipathy		a feeling of intense dislike or hostility
3. canter	(v.)	to move or ride at an easy gallop
4. consistency		regularity; firmness; the condition of holding together and retaining form
5. feral	(adj.)	existing in a wild state (as in wild animals or plants)
6. furlong	(n.)	a unit of distance equal to 220 yards or one-eighth of a mile
7. inflammation	(n.)	redness and swelling (the reaction of skin or muscles to injury or infection)
8. macabre		horrifying; dealing with or representing death
9. objectionable	(adj.)	causing disapproval; unpleasant
10. recoil		to draw back (as if in alarm, horror, or disgust)


Student Goals:

- ✓ I will correctly use and identify all parts of speech.
- ✓ I will be able to read and understand the different elements of realistic fiction.



Note: Parts of speech are not given for five words because students need to determine them in Day 3.

B. Comprehension




Teaching Tip: Use the first passage to remind students how to read for comprehension. Emphasize breaking down paragraphs and sentences into smaller pieces and then putting the pieces back together.™

Introduction to Genres

Every month we will introduce and define some new genres, or types of literature. We will study mostly fiction genres, though we will study some nonfiction genres, as well, towards the latter part of the year. All the comprehension indices will have excerpts from the genre under discussion or will compare the new genre with ones already covered. This month we begin with realistic fiction.

Realistic Fiction

Stories in the genre of realistic fiction are not true but could really happen. These stories may include real people, places, or events, but they are not based on history. Authors write these types of stories to entertain their readers or to make a point about life. Realistic fiction is the most common form of fiction and can be as long as several hundred pages or as short as a paragraph.



*Note: Some comprehension questions require the student to be creative. At times, there will be no right or wrong answers. At other times, students will need to infer. **Inferring** means looking beyond obvious answers in the texts and using information from their own experience, memories, and reasoning skills to draw a conclusion or write an answer.*

C. Grammar



Teaching Tip: Students should be familiar with the parts of speech presented as a review below. Give a brief summary and save detailed explanations for areas where students show confusion.

Parts of Speech Review

Nouns

A noun is a word that names a person, a place, thing, idea, or animal.



Example: The father told his kids that a dog is a huge responsibility, but they went to the pet store anyway.


The underlined words in the sentence are nouns. Notice that “they” is not underlined because it is a pronoun. “Responsibility” is a noun because it is an abstract idea—you cannot see, touch, or feel it, but it is a thing that exists.

Verbs

A verb shows the *subject’s* action or state of being. An action verbs show what the subject is doing.



Examples: Mrs. Smith cooks dinner.
Mrs. Smith cooked dinner.
Mrs. Smith will cook dinner.



A **subject** is the noun of a sentence. It is who or what the sentence is about.

State of being verbs do not show action. These are “to be” verbs.

Present Tense

am, is, are

Past Tense

was, were

Adjectives

An adjective is a word that describes or modifies a noun. An adjective can tell **what kind** or **how many**. It can be found directly before a noun, or right after a “to be” verb.



Example: She is pretty. There is a pretty bird.



Note: Some adjectives are not as obvious as others. A good rule to remember is that if it is next to a noun and describing what kind, which, or how many of the noun, then it is an adjective.

Examples: The American ship landed safely. ← “American” is describing the type of ship.

I want that fish, not those fish. ← “That” and “those” are describing which fish.

Your shoes are better than my shoes. ← “Your” and “my” are describing which shoes.

Adverbs

An adverb is a word that describes a verb. It can answer **how**, **when**, **how often**, or **where** of a verb. Many adverbs will end in -ly.



- Examples:** They drove carefully around the corner. (**How did they drive?**)
 I can meet her today. (**When can you meet her?**)
 They usually arrive on time. (**How often do they arrive on time?**)
 I looked everywhere. (**Where did you look?**)

Adverbs can also modify adjectives. They answer the question “How [adjective] was the subject?”



- Examples:** Marie is very proud of herself. (**How proud is Marie?**)
 The girls were extremely loud in the library. (**How loud were the girls?**)
 You are too quiet when you speak. (**How quiet are you?**)
 My dog was totally exhausted after the walk. (**How exhausted was the dog?**)

Pronouns

A pronoun replaces a noun in a sentence. It reduces repetition. There are many types of pronouns. See the list below.

1) Subject pronouns are pronouns that can replace the subject of a sentence.

I	you	she	he	they	we	it
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2) Object pronouns are pronouns that take the place of an object in a sentence.

me	you	him	her	them	us	it
----	-----	-----	-----	------	----	----

3) The demonstrative pronoun is a pronoun that shows or indicates thing or things. **Demonstrative pronouns replace a noun completely; demonstrative adjectives describe a noun.**

that	this	these	those
------	------	-------	-------



Examples: That is my favorite part of the movie. ← This is a demonstrative pronoun because there is no noun after “That.”

That part is my favorite ← This is a demonstrative adjective because there is a noun after “That.”

4) Possessive pronouns show ownership. These types of pronouns can function the same way that subject or object pronouns do: they can appear at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence.

Possessive pronouns replace a noun completely; possessive adjectives describe a noun.

mine	yours	his	hers	theirs	ours	its
------	-------	-----	------	--------	------	-----



Examples: The homework that fell on the floor is yours.
Paul's ice cream is on the table. Mine is still in the kitchen.

Notice how these pronouns do not have nouns after them. If they did have a noun after them, that would make them possessive adjectives.

His mother bought him a new toy. ← This is a possessive adjective because there is a noun after "His."

The new toy is his. ← This is a pronoun because there is no noun after "his."

5) Indefinite pronouns are pronouns that do not refer to any particular person, amount, or thing. The following are a few examples, but not all of them: all, some, any, several, anyone, nobody, both, few, either, none, one, and no one.

Conjunctions

A conjunction joins two words, phrases, or sentences together. There are three types of conjunctions, but we will review two this week. These are conjunctions you have seen in previous grades.



Teaching Tip: Students may recognize coordinating conjunctions from the acronym FANBOYS. Students can also remember that correlative conjunctions are written in pairs because the name correlative shows that conjunctions are related.

1. Coordinating conjunctions usually join independent clauses: and, but, or, yet, for, nor, and so (a comma usually comes before these conjunctions)



Examples: I have to tell her about the sale, for they have all her favorite books.

I went to the supposedly haunted house and did not see any ghosts. (There is no comma because "did not see any ghosts" is not an independent clause.)



An **independent clause** is a clause that has a subject, verb, and predicate. It can be a complete sentence on its own.

2. Correlative conjunctions are those conjunctions that are written in pairs: both...and, not only...but also, either...or, neither...nor, and whether...or.



Examples: Ice cream is not only my favorite dessert but also my grandmother's favorite.
Neither the actors nor the stage manager knew what the director was talking about.

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Comprehension Score: ____/ 6
 Vocabulary Score: ____/10
 Grammar Score: ____/14

A. Comprehension – Realistic Fiction – Read the passage below.

That had to have been the worst day in the history of school. Jean wanted to whimper as she endured the hour-long bus ride home. She didn't even care that the two boys behind her kept throwing paper at her. Everything else had gone wrong today – why not that?

Ignoring them, she tried to push aside the train wreck that was her day, but it kept running through her head. First, she almost missed the bus because her brother hid her shoes. Then, once she got to school, she realized that she'd forgotten to do an entire assignment! The teacher made her stand up in front of the whole class and apologize. She'd never been so embarrassed! And to top it all off, Jean had a fight with her best friend at lunch, so now Jen wouldn't talk to her.

Getting off the bus, she **ambled** despondently to the house with a full backpack of homework. She didn't think anything could make her feel better. Then, she heard the growling and spun around only to freeze in horror.

She'd always been afraid of the neighbor's dog. He was a huge German Shepherd, and from the first time she had seen him through the fence, she had sworn she could feel the anger and **antipathy** radiating from him. Now, he stood in the grass on the wrong side of the fence! He'd gotten loose!

Letting out a shrill scream, Jean bolted for the house, but the rain last night had soaked into the ground, giving it the **consistency** of oatmeal. With each step she took, she sank. Worse, when she tried to pick her foot up again, the mud clung to her foot and pulled her down. Struggling to go faster, she glanced over her shoulder.

The dog was right behind her!

Jean dove forward. If only she could make it to the sidewalk, she might make it to the house. But as she pulled her foot free of the mud, her shoe stayed behind, sliding off in the grip of the muck. She barely had time to gasp before she was falling and landing face-first. Before she could recover, she felt the growl of warm doggy breath vibrating through her, and sharp teeth bit into her backpack and pulled.

With a terrible sucking noise, Jean popped out of the mud as the dog lifted her by the backpack. For a moment, she hung there puppet-like and just breathed, each desperate inhalation a gift. Before she could do more than dangle, the dog started walking, dragging her along like some **macabre** doggy toy. She flailed and struggled to no avail. He wouldn't let go!

"Good doggy," she cried desperately, "drop it!"

And he did! She was so surprised she barely caught herself; then, cried out in pain at the hard landing. He'd carried her to the sidewalk. Shock vibrated through her, and she rolled to her side to stare up at the gigantic beast. He started growling again and lunged forward. She **recoiled** reflexively, but before she could even think to run, he reached her and swiped his tongue across her face.

"Eeew!" laughing and swiping ineffectually, Jean finally cried, "sit!" Immediately, he sat, wagging his tail and growling. Cautiously, she reached out and petted his head. The growl got louder, yet when she tried to pull away, he bumped his head against her hand.

A slow smile spread across Jean's face as the dog curled up against her. Maybe it wasn't such a bad day after all.

Answer the following questions about the passage.

- Why didn't Jean care that the boys were throwing paper at her?
 - She needed the paper.
 - Paper is light, so it didn't hurt.
 - She knew they would get in trouble.
 - She was too upset at her awful day to care.
- Why did the teacher make Jean apologize in front of the class?
 - The teacher is mean.
 - Jean had a fight with her best friend, Jen.
 - Jean forgot to do her homework.
 - Jean was late.

3. Why did Jean freeze in horror and run?

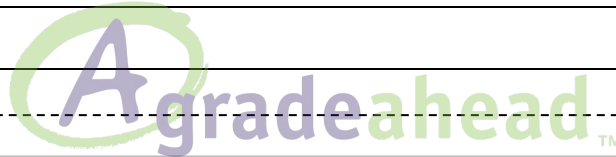
4. Why was running difficult for Jean?

- a) The stickiness of the mud tripped her.
- b) She was too afraid to run.
- c) The dog pulled her pants leg.
- d) She slipped in water.

5. When the dog pulled Jean out of the mud, why was “each desperate inhalation a gift”?

- a) Coughing made it hard to breathe.
- b) She has asthma, which makes breathing hard.
- c) She knew the dog would eat her.
- d) Getting her face out of the mud let her breathe.

6. The last sentence of the passage is “Maybe it wasn’t such a bad day after all.” Why do you think this is so? Support your opinion with information from the passage.



B. Vocabulary – Each of the following vocabulary words is used in the passage above. Use context clues to choose the best definition, and then, use the word in an original sentence. Do not look at the definitions in the examples.

1. **ambled** a) ran sadly b) fell awkwardly c) walked slowly d) skipped daintily

2. _____

3. **antipathy** a) pain b) dislike c) evil d) upset

4. _____

5. **consistency** a) usually b) flavor and texture c) wetness d) form and firmness

6. _____

7. **macabre** a) floppy b) really big c) dark and disturbing d) unusually squeaky

8. _____

9. **recoil** a) pull back b) a snap c) curl up d) run

10. _____

C. Grammar – Parts of Speech – Read the previous passage in Day 1 to determine the part of speech of the following words. When in doubt, use context clues to double check.

1. whimper	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
2. realized	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
3. teacher	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
4. despondently	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
5. puppet-like	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
6. ineffectually	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
7. gigantic	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
8. inhalation	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb

Find all of the parts of speech from the sentence below. List the words next to their corresponding part of speech. If a part of speech is not used in the sentence, write “none.”

“He was a huge German Shepherd, and from the first time she had seen him through the fence, she had sworn she could feel the anger and antipathy ...”

9. noun(s): _____

10. verb(s): _____

11. adjective(s): _____

12. adverb (s): _____

13. pronoun(s): _____

14. conjunction(s): _____

Week: 1 – Day 1

A. Comprehension

1. d [We know this from the last sentence in paragraph 1, "Everything...that?"]
2. c ["she realized that she'd forgotten to do an entire assignment!" – line 3 of paragraph 2]

Exact answers will vary for 3, but the meaning should remain the same. An example is given.

3. Jean froze in horror and ran because her neighbor's dog was loose, and she wanted to get away from him.
4. a [The sticky mud pulled off her shoe and made her fall.]
5. d [Jean landed face-first in the mud, and since she couldn't breathe with her face in the mud, she was very grateful to breath when she got out of it.]

Answers for 6 will vary. Students should back their opinion with information from the passage. Example:

6. I think the day wasn't so bad because Jean made a new friend and learned not to be afraid of her neighbors' dog. Even though she'd had a horrible day, the dog made her laugh by licking her face and comforted her when he curled up against her, and that made the day better.

B. Vocabulary

Answers for even numbers will vary. Students should use the given word in an original sentence. Examples are given. Vocabulary words are underlined.

1. c
2. The little boy ambled down the street since he had nowhere particular to go.
3. b
4. My brother's antipathy of homework sometimes gets him into trouble.
5. d
6. She didn't mind the flavor of cottage cheese, but she really disliked the consistency.
7. c
8. I like to read macabre books like ghost stories and books by Stephen King.
9. a
10. The camper saw the skunk by her pillow and recoiled in horror.

C. Grammar

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1. Verb | 2. Verb |
| 3. Noun | 4. Adverb |
| 5. Adjective | 6. Adverb |
| 7. Adjective | 8. Noun |
9. German Shepherd, time, fence, anger, antipathy
 10. was, had seen, had sworn, could feel
 11. huge, first [when modifying a noun, "first" is an adjective.]
 12. none
 13. He, she, him, she, she
 14. and, and

