

Unit Overview: Parent Guide

Memoir, Grade 7

What is the goal of this unit?

Your child will read various memoirs and texts about a writer's craft to understand the importance of memoirs and "coming of age" literature. She will explore her own voice and style as a writer by writing her own memoir.

What topics and skills is your seventh grader learning in this unit?

- Memoir
- Writer's craft
- Coming of age
- Voice
- Argument writing
- Narrative writing
- Informational writing

What tasks will your child engage in to help them consider the topics and skills of this unit?

- **Culminating Writing Task:** Your child will bring together all her learning near the end of the unit by writing an essay in response to the question: *Does the memoir you read support and/or contradict Zinsser's advice for writing a memoir in "How to Write a Memoir"?*
- **Extension Task:** Your child will extend her learning by writing a personal memoir based on lessons learned about voice and style in writing.

Your child will read these texts and watch these videos:

Text Title	Author/Source	How it is used in the Unit
"How to Write a Memoir"	William Zinsser from <i>The American Scholar</i>	Main text of the unit
<i>A Summer Life</i>	Gary Soto	Independent reading text
<i>Bad Boy: A Memoir</i>	Walter Dean Myers	Independent reading text
<i>The Circuit</i>	Francisco Jimenez	Independent reading text
<i>Guts</i>	Gary Paulsen	Independent reading text

<i>Soul Surfer</i>	Bethany Hamilton and Rick Bundschuh	Independent reading text
<i>Zlata's Diary</i>	Zlata Filipovic	Independent reading text
<i>Boy: Tales of Childhood</i>	Roald Dahl	Independent reading text
<i>The Elements of Style (Illustrated)</i>	William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White	Student text
<i>Woman Hollering Creek</i>	Sandra Cisneros	Student text
<i>A Fire in My Hands</i>	Gary Soto	Student text
"Thank You Ma'am"	Langston Hughes	Student text
"Advice for Writers"	Rick Riordan from RickRiordan.com	Student text
"Short Memoirs: Six Little Words Can be Revealing"	Doug Mason	Read aloud

Ideas for discussing memoir and coming of age

- What are the characteristics of a memoir?
- What does it mean to "come of age"?
- What are the characteristics of a "coming of age" story?
- What are some coming of age traditions from your culture?
- What can we learn from memoirs and "coming of age" stories?
- How would you tell your own story of growing up/coming of age?

Want to deepen your and your child's knowledge on the topic being studied?

Here is a suggested book list:

Title	Author
The Outsiders	S.E. Hinton
The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao	Junot Diaz
How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents	Julia Alvarez
Souder	William H. Armstrong

What does independent reading look like at home?

Independent reading gives your child the opportunity to read and interact with books that are on her reading level and that address topics that she chooses. Supporting independent reading at home helps build your child's confidence with reading, her reading stamina and reading achievement, and will help her do better in school.

Here are some ways you can encourage independent reading at home:

- Let your child pick out books that she finds interesting
- Prioritize reading. Protect time every day for reading. Before bedtime is a great time to read!
- Read together
- Read aloud
- Discuss what you're reading. Ask questions like:
 - Tell me about what you read today.
 - What did you like about it?
 - What didn't you like about it?
 - What did you learn?
 - What questions do you have about what you read?
 - What didn't you understand about what you read?
 - What do you want to learn more about after reading?
 - How does what you've read connect to other things you've read?