

# Unit Overview: Parent Guide

## Written in Bone, Grade 7

### What is the goal of this unit?

Your child will read fiction and nonfiction texts about stories from the past to understand how these texts can offer different historical perspectives and how authors sometimes alter details of history to serve a purpose. Your child will show what she's learned by corroborating details of the past, figure out an author's purpose, and write her own fictionalized historical account.

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

- Historical perspective
- Author's purpose
- Colonial America
- Research
- Narrative writing
- Incorporating history into narrative
- Explanatory 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 their learning near the end of the unit by writing an essay that answers the question: *The idea that forensic anthropologists explore bones to tell the stories of the past is developed throughout Written in Bone. What is another central idea of the text? How are both ideas developed over the course of the text?*
- **Extension Task:** Your child will extend her learning by writing a real or fictionalized historical account that covers a historical perspective not covered by the texts of the unit.

### Your child will read these texts and watch these videos:

Text Title	Author/Source	How it is used in the Unit
<i>Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland</i>	Sally M. Walker	Main text of the unit
<i>Blood on the River: James Town, 1607</i>	Elisa Carbone	Student text

<i>A Book of Americans "Indian"</i>	Master George Percy (National Humanities Center)	Student text
<i>"Ode to the Virginian Voyage"</i>	Michael Drayton	Student text
<i>"Pochahontas"</i>	William Makepeace Thackeray	Student text
<i>"Finding Remains"</i> (video)	Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History	Read Aloud
<i>Written in Bone Online Exhibit</i>	Smithsonian	Groups
<i>"Written in Bone: Stories of Life and Death in Colonial Chesapeake"</i> (video)	Smithsonian Education	Read Aloud

### Ideas for discussing historical perspective and author's purpose

- What is history?
- Who is telling the story you're reading?
- Why did the author choose this perspective?
- Why are there different historical perspectives?
- What can we learn about history from different historical perspectives?
- As you are learning more about the history of this time, what voices are missing in what you are reading?
  - Why did the author make that choice?
  - What does it say about the author's goal for this story?

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

Here is a suggested book list:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
The Bone Detectives	Donna Jackson
James Towne : Struggle for Survival	Marcia Sewall
1607: A New Look at Jamestown	Karen Lange
John Smith Escapes Again	Rosalyn Schanzer
Who's Saying What in Jamestown, Thomas Savage?	Jean Fritz

## 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?