



every child
is capable of
greatness



**WIT &
WISDOM[®]**

Getting Started Guide
Grade 7 Module 1

Getting Started

This Getting Started Guide provides contextual information as you review the sample *Wit & Wisdom*® lesson. Follow along as we explore the contents of the lesson and learn how students gain content knowledge and develop skills in reading texts, writing, speaking, and listening.

More Meaningful Language Arts Instruction

Wit & Wisdom is a knowledge-building K–8 curriculum that has transformed English language arts (ELA) instruction in classrooms across the nation. Great Minds® believes that classrooms are places where students and teachers encounter wit, wisdom, wonder, rigor, and knowledge, and that literature, history, art, and science all have a place in ELA instruction. *Wit & Wisdom* helps students build rich layers of knowledge. Our learning design inspires teachers and students to experience complex texts and ideas on a deeper level by fostering the questioning spirit that will shape the next generation of great writers, thinkers, and leaders.

Understanding *Wit & Wisdom*

The [Wit & Wisdom Implementation Guide](#) helps educators bring the curriculum into their classrooms. The guide provides a detailed map of the resources built into the curriculum and offers advice on how to prepare to teach each module. We'll highlight some of the information covered in the Implementation Guide to help you explore *Wit & Wisdom* Grade 7 Module 1.



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Guidance Built into Every Lesson

Our teacher-writers crafted *Wit & Wisdom* to provide students with a knowledge-building learning experience while giving teachers support in every module to facilitate the learning. Examples of supports include the following:

- Getting Started videos for teachers
- [The Teacher Resource Pack](#)
- Preparation Protocols
- Scaffold, extension, and differentiation notes
- Point-of-use Teacher Notes
- Multilingual Glossaries
- [Curriculum Overview for Families](#)
- Teacher Edition appendices resources

Building Knowledge Through Complex Texts

Wit & Wisdom teacher-writers identified texts and topics that will build students' knowledge of key topics in history/social studies, science, literature, and the arts. These topics and associated texts increase in complexity across the year and vertically across grade bands. Students build knowledge across diverse disciplines throughout each of the modules in Grade 7.

Grade 7 Module Topics and Texts



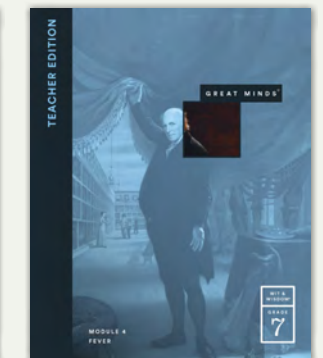
Module 1:
Identity in the Middle Ages



Module 2:
Americans All



Module 3:
Language and Power



Module 4:
Fever

What students learn in one lesson, an arc of lessons, a module, and a grade level prepares them for the next lesson, arc of lessons, module, and grade level. Each experience builds on the previous one, so students establish strong background knowledge.

A Map to the *Learning*

Wit & Wisdom modules are organized around a compelling topic, an **Essential Question**, a curated set of texts, and a series of **Focusing Questions** that build students' knowledge and skills and prepare students for the module's culminating assessment—the End-of-Module (EOM) Task. Modules are written in a careful horizontal progression, each one building on the previous one through routines, content knowledge, skills, developmental appropriateness, and rigor. Each module is designed to support educators with the introductory Module Overview, which reviews the module's focus, organization, and elements.

For a snapshot of Grade 7 Module 1: *Identity in the Middle Ages*, head to the **Module Overview**. The overview sums up the student learning goals, provides insights on previous knowledge students will use in this module, shows where in the curriculum students will use this module's learning to build new layers of understanding complex knowledge, lists the core texts and topics students will examine, and finally lists the standards this module will address.

Diving into a *Lesson*

Grade 7 Module 1: *Identity in the Middle Ages*, Lesson 7

The module we've selected explores the questions of identity in society by taking students on a literary expedition to the Middle Ages. Though it may seem distant, this medieval exploration illustrates the influence of societal forces on identity formation—an influence that remains undeniable in seventh graders' modern setting. In your sampler, you will find a copy of *Castle Diary: The Journal of Tobias Burgess* by Richard Platt.

The image displays two overlapping screenshots of a digital curriculum interface. The left screenshot shows the 'Module Summary' page for Grade 6 Module 1: 'Resilience in the Great...'. It features a poem at the top: 'The way I see it, hard times aren't only About money, Or drought, Or dust, Hard times are about losing spirit, And hope, And what happens when dreams dry up.' Below the poem is a paragraph of text about the Great Depression. A navigation menu is overlaid on the bottom right, listing: 'Module Overview', 'Module Summary', 'Essential Question', 'Suggested Student Understandings', 'Texts', 'Module Learning Goals', and 'Module in Context'. The right screenshot shows the 'Lesson 7' overview page. It includes a 'FOCUSING QUESTION: LESSONS 1-7' (How does society influence identity and experience?), a 'TEXT' (Castle Diary: The Journal of Tobias Burgess, Richard Platt), and a 'Prepare' section. Below that is another 'FOCUSING QUESTION: LESSONS 1-7' (How does society influence identity and experience?), a 'CONTENT FRAMING QUESTION: LESSON 7' (How does Castle Diary build my knowledge of the Middle Ages?), and 'CRAFT QUESTIONS: LESSON 7'. A 'SUMMARY' section follows, then 'MATERIALS' (Handout 7A: Speaking and Listening Goal Setting, Handout 7A: Socratic Seminar Discussion Starters, Assessment 7A: Focusing Question Task). The 'Lesson 7: At a Glance' section lists an 'Agenda' with 'Welcome (5 min.)', 'Launch (10 min.)', and 'Learn (50 min.)'. A final navigation menu is overlaid on the bottom right, listing: 'Lesson 7 Overview', 'Welcome/Launch', 'Learn - Participate in Socratic Seminar', 'Learn - Express Understanding', 'Land/Wrap', and 'Handout 7A: Socratic Seminar Discussion Starters'.

Achieving the *Standards*

Wit & Wisdom integrates practice with the reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills students need in Kindergarten through Grade 8 to prepare for the demands of future study and ultimately for college and their careers. All reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language standards appear as Focus Standards in one or more modules, where they are explicitly taught, repeatedly practiced, and formally assessed. You can see a full list of the Focus Standards and Continuing Standards under **Standards** in the **Module Overview**.

Art in *Context*

We recognize that visual art is a universal and essential form of expression and communication, accessible to all learners. Each *Wit & Wisdom* module provides multiple opportunities for students to engage with significant works of art, such as paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, architecture, and photographs. *Wit & Wisdom* teacher-writers chose each work to inspire students to grapple with broader concepts related to each module's knowledge story. In Module 1, students look at Giotto di Bondone's painting [Joachim among the Shepherds](#) and reflect on the techniques and elements of visual arts to build an understanding of how writers and visual artists create characters and tell stories, through different art forms.



Joachim among the Shepherds, Giotto di Bondone

Text-Dependent Questions

In all grades of *Wit & Wisdom*, students learn how to read, access, and analyze complex texts by working through a sequence of five Content Stages: Wonder, Organize, Reveal, Distill, and Know.

Each lesson begins and ends with a Content Framing Question that provides an overarching learning purpose for the text-dependent tasks and **text-dependent questions (TDQs)** in the lesson. The Content Framing Questions align with the Content Stages for close reading and follow a repeating structure. Framing each lesson with familiar questions helps students build the habits of mind they need to become independent close readers. The discussions, text-dependent tasks, and TDQs in each Content Stage serve a distinct purpose, illuminating key close-reading approaches.



WONDER: Students generate their own observations and questions, forming an initial impression of the text.



ORGANIZE: This stage ensures literal comprehension of the text's characters, events, and setting and the historical facts upon which it is based.



REVEAL: Readers focus intently on different and unique aspects of the text, such as language choice, literary devices, or structure and analyze how each element affects meaning.



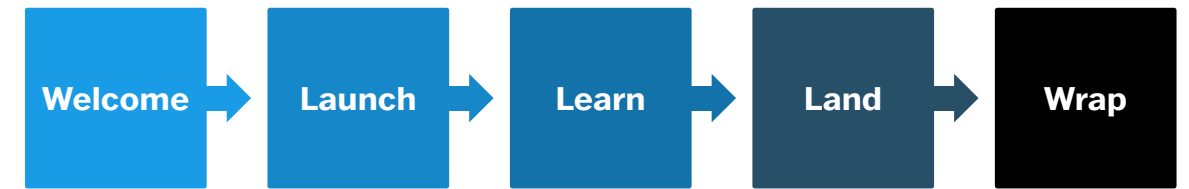
DISTILL: Students express the central ideas or themes of the text and determine how key aspects of the text support these ideas and themes.



KNOW: Students articulate how a text builds their knowledge, and they expand their knowledge by connecting the text to other texts and topics of study.

In Lesson 7, the Content Framing Question asks how does *Castle Diary* build my knowledge of identity, experience, and opportunity in the Middle Ages?

All *Wit & Wisdom* lessons organize student learning in the same five sections followed by a **Deep Dive**:



Grade 7 Module 1 Lesson 7

Lesson Section	Time	Description
Welcome	5 min.	Students review discussion starters that they can use in the lesson's Socratic Seminar.
Launch	10 min.	The teacher introduces the lesson's Content Framing Question . Students will analyze how <i>Castle Diary</i> builds on their knowledge of identity, experience, and opportunity in the Middle Ages. Pairs discuss the Socratic Seminar question to prepare for the day's discussion.
Learn	50 min.	Through varied instructional routines and tasks, teachers support students as they engage in productive struggle with their peers. Students will partake in a Socratic Seminar, a student-directed academic discussion. Students will discuss how the Medieval social order influenced identity, experience, and opportunity. As in all <i>Wit & Wisdom</i> Socratic Seminars, students engage through identifying textual examples and evidence, posing follow-up questions, and working independently with minimal teacher participation. In this lesson, students will also complete Focusing Question Task 1 and write a brief journal entry from the point of view of a character.
Land	5 min.	The teacher facilitates student reflections on how they met lesson goals and responded to the Focusing Question Task, to write a brief journal entry from the point of view of the poacher.
Wrap	5 min.	The teacher assigns students the task of writing in their Knowledge Journals: "How does <i>Castle Diary</i> build my knowledge of identity and the Middle Ages? What do I know now that I didn't know before reading it?"
Deep Dive		Note that there is no Deep Dive in this lesson. Teachers and students can use additional time to support practice of the vocabulary and/or style and conventions skills introduced in the module.
Total Lesson Time = 75 min.		

Volume of Reading

In addition to core and supplementary texts, the curriculum includes a list of Volume of Reading texts. These are literary and informational texts that teachers can use for additional classroom instruction and that students can select for independent reading. *Wit & Wisdom* Volume of Reading texts help students of all abilities expand their knowledge of each module topic. [View the full Volume of Reading titles for each grade.](#)

Multimedia Learning Approach

Great Minds gives students varied access points to learning in each module. Lessons include ways for teachers to incorporate media and create digital learning experiences to engage students in exploring module concepts. For example, in Module 1 Lesson 9, students listen to “Lamento de Tristano” to immerse themselves in the medieval world as they answer the content framing question.



Assessing Knowledge and Understanding

Wit & Wisdom provides five major types of assessments.

Assessment	Frequency	Type	What Does It Assess?
Check for Understanding	1+ per lesson	Formative	Lesson-level learning goal(s)
Focusing Question Task	3–6 per module	Formative or summative	Module learning goals for knowledge, reading, writing, speaking, and/or language
New-Read Assessment	2–3 per module	Formative or summative	Transfer of reading and/or language module learning goals to a new text or a portion of text focused on a topic that has been introduced
Socratic Seminar	2–3 per module	Formative or summative	Module learning goals for knowledge, speaking, and language
End-of-Module Task	1 per module	Summative	Module learning goals for knowledge, reading, writing, speaking, and/or language

For more information about the structure and design of major assessments in Grade 7 Module 1, look for the **Major Assessments** section under the **Module Overview**.

Major Assessments

Focusing Question Tasks	Elements that Support Success on the EOM Task	Standards
<p>1. Write a diary entry from the poacher's point of view. In it, the poacher should reflect on 1) his place in the social hierarchy and 2) how his society has shaped his identity.</p> <p>FQT 1</p> <p>FQT 1 PDF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate an understanding of how the medieval social hierarchy shapes identity. Use sensory language to convey experiences. Establish character and point of view. 	<p>RL.7.3</p> <p>W.7.3</p> <p>W.7.4</p>
<p>2. List four narrative elements or techniques that exemplify what <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> can teach readers about storytelling. Provide textual evidence that illustrates how <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> models each element or technique.</p> <p>FQT 2</p> <p>FQT 2 PDF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate an understanding of how narrative elements and techniques develop strong storytelling. 	<p>RL.7.1</p>
<p>3. Use descriptive details to slow down the pacing and “explode” a moment in the life of Alyce, <i>The Midwife's Apprentice's</i> protagonist.</p> <p>FQT 3</p> <p>FQT 3 PDF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a medieval setting. Use narrative techniques to capture action and convey experiences. Write an engaging beginning and an ending that provides resolution. 	<p>W.7.2</p> <p>W.7.4</p>
New-Read Assessments	Elements that Support Success on the EOM Task	Standards
<p>1. Read pages 63–68 of <i>Castor Diary</i>. Respond to multiple-choice questions to demonstrate comprehension, determine word meaning, and analyze Platt's use of historical detail.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate understanding of how historical fiction writers use historical details. 	<p>RL.7.1</p> <p>RL.7.2</p> <p>RL.7.4</p> <p>RL.7.9</p>

Module Overview

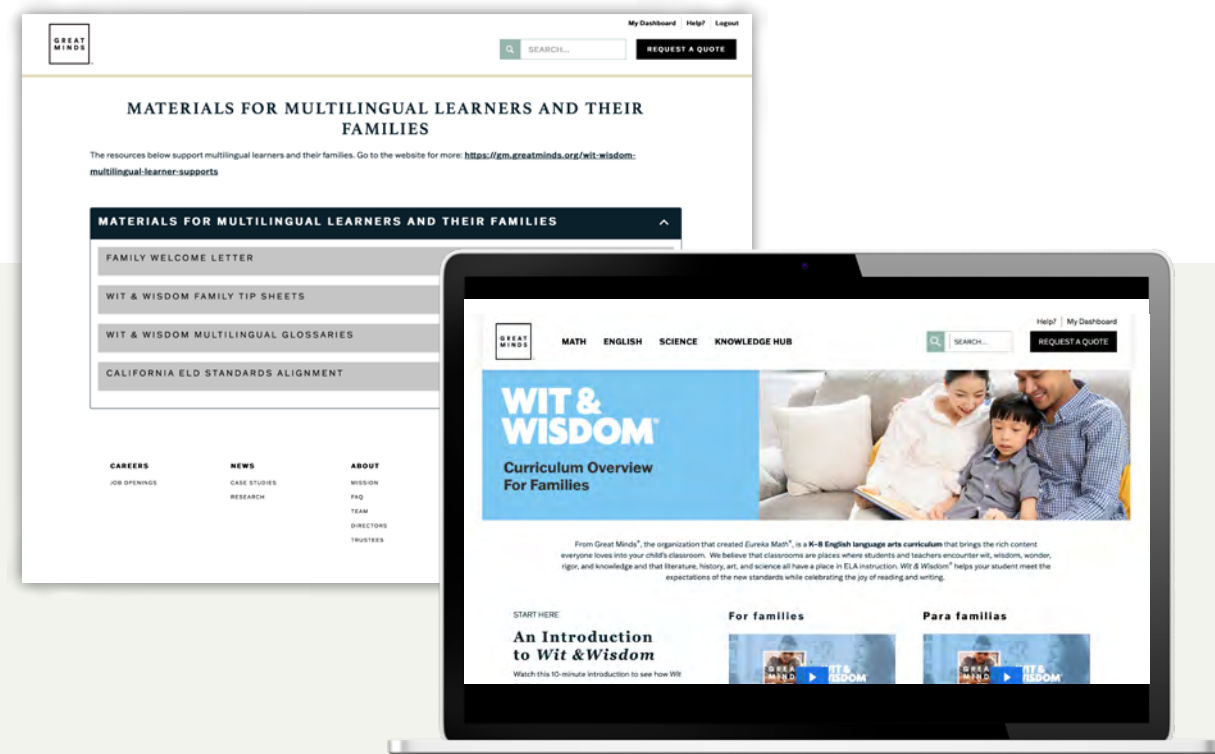
- Module Summary
- Essential Question
- Suggested Student Understandings
- Texts
- Module Learning Goals
- Module in Context
- Standards
- Major Assessments**

Enhanced Supports for Multilingual Learners

The Multilingual Learner Resources are research-aligned supports to boost grades K-5 multilingual learners' experience with *Wit & Wisdom* and can be found within the collection for each grade in the Digital Teacher Edition. Each resource includes:

- Multilingual Learner Resource Module Map, which lists the lessons and their supports in module sequence
- Overview of module learning and alignment to WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) and ELP (English Language Proficiency) standards
- Lesson-specific supports for each literacy strand: reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening; existing supports are listed first, followed by new recommendations.

The **Materials for Multilingual Learners and Their Families** resource found on the teacher dashboard invites families and caregivers of multilingual students to participate in their learning. Supports include multilingual glossaries for each grade, Welcome Letters, and Family Tip Sheets in multiple languages.



Engaging Learners and Boosting Literacy

At Great Minds, we strongly believe that every child is capable of greatness, especially when they're given access to engaging, knowledge-building instructional materials. For a deeper dive into the learning design behind *Wit & Wisdom*, check out the free Teacher Resource Pack or get in touch with your Great Minds representative.

Professional Learning From Trusted Colleagues

For schools and districts adopting *Wit & Wisdom*, we offer professional learning opportunities crafted by our team of teacher-writers. We've developed two tracks of learning, one for teachers and one for leaders. Our *Wit & Wisdom* Fellows, a cohort of seasoned *Wit & Wisdom* educators, also provide guidance and share their expertise on different platforms, from blogs and social media to digital and in-person training. Through ongoing support, we will help you effectively implement the curriculum and grow in confidence as you learn to lead your *Wit & Wisdom* classroom.



Please contact your Great Minds representative to access the digital *Wit & Wisdom* resources.