

The Mini-PASS Reading series; 6A, 6B, 7A, 7B, 8A, and 8B was written in 1999 to:

1. Encourage the love of reading
2. Teach story elements
3. Teach reading skills in a meaningful way
4. Enhance comprehension skills through narrative and informational selections

The selections include: short stories, poems, letters, fables, myths, tall tales, excerpts from novels, and scientific and historical articles to extend the student's range of reading while teaching critical higher-order thinking skills.

State mandated tests are becoming increasingly popular; therefore, state goals and objectives were incorporated into the materials.

Each course has a theme that ties the units together with a paperback book.

INTRODUCTION TO READING

Reading is like a painting in many respects. The author tries to paint a picture with words, but often what is written means different things to different people, just like some paintings can be interpreted in different ways. And like paintings, not everyone likes the same kind. Some authors are easy to understand, some are hard-just like some paintings where you can't tell exactly what the picture is about. You may not like every piece in this collection, but hopefully you will learn to appreciate different styles of writing, and even try your own hand at writing something creative.

Reading can help us understand ourselves and the world around is more completely. You will find characters you love, hate and can relate to. You will read about life from someone else's perspective. Hopefully, reading these selections will encourage your love of literature and help you to think about why people do the things they do. Maybe it will help you to think about what things you can or should do in your own life, and why.

You will read a variety of types of literature in these units: a novel, a short story, a collection of myths and poetry. Each of these formats is different. In a novel, there is time to get really well acquainted with the characters, and to have a complex and involved plot. In a short story, there is time only for a simple situation that has a relatively short story line. A poem is more like a word picture, and may not have a plot or characters at all. It may be very dense, where each word could have a whole paragraph of meaning.

In order to understand what you read, you need to know what the words mean. Memorizing vocabulary isn't always interesting, but using colorful and exciting words is what makes a colorful and exciting story. The best way to learn more words is by reading. As you read, be sure to pay attention to what the words mean. If you don't understand something, look for context clues that will help you. If you are really confused, try asking another person, or consult a dictionary. Using only common simple words is like trying to make a table out of whole trees: people will know what it is, but it won't be smooth or beautiful.

It is helpful to know who the author is, and to learn as much as possible about him or her. This will help you to understand the purpose and the content of the writing. You also will want to think about what you read. Often for young children, books are a source of authority. Many children and even some adults believe everything they read. As you grow in your ability to think, you need to begin asking questions about what you read. Why does the author say that? Is it true? Do you agree? Is it important to know what the author is trying to accomplish? What is his or her purpose in writing? Was it accomplished?

When you read, be careful to notice details. If you are watching television or a movie, you don't always have to exert much effort to understand what is going on, but it isn't always like that with literature. You must learn to be an active reader, paying attention to details, looking for patterns, symbolism and meaning. Active, careful reading will also improve your writing.