LESSON OBJECTIVES
• Summarize a literary text by restating in one’s own words the main characters, setting, and key events in sequence.
• Provide an objective summary free of personal opinions or judgments.

THE LEARNING PROGRESSION
• Grade 6 requires students to use important story details to create an accurate summary that is free of bias and personal opinions.
• Grade 7 builds on the Grade 6 standard by requiring students to summarize important story details and elements briefly and objectively.
• Grade 8 requires students to provide an unbiased, accurate summary based on the relationships among various story elements.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS
• Identify main characters and setting.
• Identify key story events and plot development, including the conflict and its resolution.
• Organize events in sequential order.
• Summarize a text by identifying main characters, key events, and setting without offering bias or personal judgment.

TAP STUDENTS’ PRIOR KNOWLEDGE
• Tell students that they will be working on a lesson about summarizing literary texts.
• First, ask students to define plot. (a series of events in a story, including a conflict and its resolution) Remind students that it is important to recognize the main plot events in a literary text.
• Next, ask students to define character and setting. (the people, animals, or creatures who take part in the action; the time and place where the story is set)
• Finally, review that a summary of a literary text is a brief retelling of a story that describes the main characters, setting, and important events, including the conflict and resolution. It should be told in the student’s own words.
• Remind students that a good summary is accurate. It identifies the main characters and setting. It extracts the key plot events, presenting them in a sequential and concise way. Explain that good summaries do not include personal opinions or judgments about the text.
Lesson 8  Part 1: Introduction

### Summarizing Literary Texts

Have you ever seen a movie that you couldn’t wait to tell your friends about? You probably described it to them using just a few sentences. A summary is a brief retelling of a story that includes the main characters, setting, and important events, including the conflict and its resolution. When summarizing, be sure to tell events in the order they happen. Also be sure to tell it using objective statements that are free of opinions or judgments.

**Read the story below. Make notes in the margins about the characters, setting, and events.**

**Characters:** Merlin, Arthur

**Setting:** Medieval town square

**Events:**
- Young Arthur comes forward to try. He succeeds in freeing Excalibur.
- All hail our new king!
- Only the true king can free Excalibur.
- Let Arthur have a chance.
- Even the strongest townsfolk cannot pull the sword from the stone.
- After many people try and fail to pull the sword Excalibur from the stone, Arthur succeeds and becomes the new king of England.

**Summary:**
After many people try and fail to pull the sword Excalibur from the stone, Arthur succeeds and becomes the new king of England.

Summaries retell important events and identify setting and characters in an objective fashion. Good readers summarize to check their understanding and remember important plot details.

### Genre Focus

#### Literary Texts: Myths and Legends

Tell students that in this lesson they will read myths and legends. Explain that a myth is a fictional story that often explains something about human behavior or the natural world. Myths usually have the following characteristics:

- beliefs and ideals from a particular culture
- characters that are gods, goddesses, or godlike beings with extraordinary powers
- heroes that possess traits valued by the culture

Based on these characteristics, ask students to name some myths. What are the myths about?

Next describe the characteristics of legends:

- tales passed down across generations and often told as if they were true stories
- human characters who perform brave deeds
- a main character who is usually ethical, moral, skillful, and honest

Ask students to name some familiar legends. What are the legends about?

Explain that students will read “Glooskap and the Wasis,” a legend about a fierce Algonquin warrior. They will also read two myths about the defeat of a monster and how evil was loosed on the world.
Students read a legend about Glooskap. They identify the characters, setting, and most important events to include in an objective summary.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Invite volunteers to tell what they learned on the previous page about writing objective summaries.
- Read aloud “Glooskap and Wasis.”
- Then read the question: “What is the best way to summarize this part of the legend?”
- Tell students you will use a Think Aloud to demonstrate a way of answering the question.

**Think Aloud:** First, I’m going to identify the main characters and the setting. One of the main characters is Glooskap, a fierce Algonquin warrior. The other main character is the Wasis, a being who has never been defeated. The setting is Glooskap’s village.

- Have students underline details about the characters, setting, and events in the story.
- If possible, display a chart similar to the chart on page 69. Work with students to fill in the information about the characters and setting.

**Think Aloud:** Next, I will note the main plot events. The first main event is Glooskap returning home, where he sees the Wasis. Then his wife warns him not to upset or interfere with the Wasis.

- Add these first two events to the chart. Have students describe the other main events in this part of the story. Remind them to list the events in order.

**Think Aloud:** Now I have the information I need to write a summary. When I write a summary, I need to make sure it is objective, or free from my judgments.

- Read aloud the summary on this page. Then read each bullet point and discuss why each word or phrase makes a summary that is not objective.
- Finally, read the summary with all the words crossed out. Ask students how the two are different.
- Have partners complete the activity at the bottom of the page. Invite volunteers to share their responses. (Sample response: The Wasis’ disobedience greatly angers Glooskap.)

Explore how to answer this question: “What is the best way to summarize this part of the legend?”

A summary includes characters, setting, and important events. Underline these elements in the text above.

Summaries should also be objective, or free of opinions and judgments. Read the following summary and cross out any opinion words or statements. Then check your work against the bullet points.

Glooskap was incensed that an enemy had infiltrated his home. He challenged the small creature to a test of strength, but the Wasis ignored him. Outraged, he ordered the Wasis to crawl to him and acknowledge him as its master, but the creature only laughed.

**Tier Two Vocabulary: Incensed**

- Direct students to the word *incensed* in paragraph 3. Help them use context clues to figure out its meaning. Ask what words in the text help them determine the meaning. (outraged) Then have them tell the meaning of the word. (“made very angry”)
- Have students list some synonyms and antonyms for the word. (synonyms: angry, furious; antonyms: happy, pleased) Then encourage students to use a thesaurus to check their lists.
**Lesson 8**

**Part 3: Guided Instruction**

**AT A GLANCE**

Students continue reading the legend of Glooskap and the Wasis. They answer a multiple-choice question and objectively summarize the story.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Tell students that they will continue reading about Glooskap and the Wasis.
- The Close Reading helps students determine the important events and details. The Hint will help them identify choices that make judgments.
- Have students read the passage and underline details that describe the ways the Wasis responds to Glooskap’s actions, as directed by the Close Reading.
- Ask volunteers to share the details they underlined. Discuss what these details help them understand about the characters and events.
- Have students answer the question and Show Your Thinking; then discuss their responses. Finally, have partners practice objectively summarizing the entire story. Sample response for Show Your Thinking: Choice A is not a good summary because the second sentence contains a judgment.

**ANSWER ANALYSIS**

**Choice A is incorrect.** The second sentence offers a judgment, which makes the summary biased.

**Choice B is correct.** The summary is objective and lists the most important events in chronological order.

**Choice C is incorrect.** The legend does not state that the wife’s warning was wrong.

**Choice D is incorrect.** It leaves out important events. Glooskap picks up the Wasis, which soothes it, and after that, whenever a baby coos at his father, the Wasis remembers his victory.

**ERROR ALERT:** Students who did not choose B might not understand that a complete summary must include the main events and should not include personal judgments. Have students reread each choice and eliminate choices that are incomplete, inaccurate, or biased. They should recognize that only choice B gives a more complete, objective summary.

**ELL Support: Comparatives and Superlatives**

- Explain to students that superlatives are words that compare three or more things. To form the superlative, the ending -est is added to adjectives with one or two syllables. For longer words, the word most is used before the adjective.
- Read the first sentence. Point out that mightiest is the superlative form of the adjective mighty. Explain that mightiest warrior means “more mighty than any other warrior.”
- Work with students to identify another superlative in the legend and explain its meaning. (most fearsome; “more fearsome than any other warrior”)

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**Close Reading**

What are the most important events that occur in this part of the text? Underline two or more details that describe the ways the Wasis responds to Glooskap’s actions.

**Hint**

Eliminate any choices that make a judgment, are inaccurate, or are vague.

**Show Your Thinking**

Explain why one other answer choice is not a good summary of the story ending.

*Responses will vary.*

With a partner, take turns objectively summarizing the entire legend in your own words. Include characters, setting, and important events.

**Circle the correct answer.**

Which of the following choices is the best summary of the story ending?

A. Glooskap finally figures out that the Wasis is his son. He may have been a mighty warrior, but he wasn’t very smart.

B. The mighty Glooskap is unable to defeat the crying baby Wasis. This victory is remembered every time a baby coos at its father.

C. The wife’s warning that Glooskap would suffer proves to be wrong. Glooskap ends up enjoying the time he spends with his son.

D. Although Glooskap asks the Wasis to stop crying, it refuses to do so. Even dancing, singing, and making a face doesn’t work.

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**In an uncontrollable fury, Glooskap screamed at the Wasis that he alone was the mightiest warrior! This time, the Wasis did respond; it opened its throat and let out a terrible, heartbroken wail.**

Glooskap covered his ears, but the creature’s howls split his skull. He asked it to stop crying; but it would not. He danced a funny dance, sang a song, and made a face, but it wasn’t until Glooskap held the Wasis that the creature was finally appeased. Satisfied, the baby cooed “goo” at his father—for son and father they were. And forever after, when a baby coos “goo goo” at his father, the Wasis remembers his victory over Glooskap.

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- Read the first sentence. Point out that mightiest is the superlative form of the adjective mighty. Explain that mightiest warrior means “more mighty than any other warrior.”
- Work with students to identify another superlative in the legend and explain its meaning. (most fearsome; “more fearsome than any other warrior”)
Students read a myth twice about a brave warrior named Beowulf. After the first reading, you will ask three questions to check your students’ comprehension of the passage.

**Close Reading**

1. What happens to make the music and laughter stop in Heorot Hall? *(A monster named Grendel kills thirty of Hrothgar’s men. For twelve years, none of the soldiers could beat Grendel.)*

2. Who is Beowulf, and what does he do? *(He is a young warrior who claims he will kill Grendel.)*

3. What is the resolution of the story problem? *(Beowulf and Grendel fight, and Beowulf wins. Fatally wounded, Grendel runs back to the lake and dies.)*

**Tip:** The Study Buddy tells students to think about how the elements of a myth might be included in a summary of the text. Remind students that the plot events are not the only important part of a summary. The setting is particularly important in a myth.

**Tip:** Close Reading guides students to underline details that reveal the central conflict and the characters who are most affected. Encourage students to use the strategy of rereading and taking notes when they encounter questions in other contexts, such as in standardized tests or when reading content-related texts in other subjects.

**Tier Two Vocabulary: Benevolently**

- Point out the word *benevolently* in paragraph 1. Ask students what part of speech the word is and what it modifies. *(adverb; ruled)*
- Then help students use the context in the sentence and the paragraph to determine the meaning of *benevolently*. Have students list the words or phrases they used as clues to its meaning. *(“hosted great feasts,” “joined in the merriment,” “great king”)*
- Have students define *benevolently*. *(“kindly”)* Then have them use a dictionary to verify this meaning.
**L8: Summarizing Literary Texts**

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**Lesson 8**

**Part 4: Guided Practice**

**STEP BY STEP**

- Have students read questions 1–3, using the Hints to help them answer those questions.

**Tip:** The first Hint reminds students that summaries should be objective—free of bias or judgments—and include information about the main characters and important events. Have students cross out any choices that contain judgments or bias.

- Discuss with students the Answer Analysis below.

**ANSWER ANALYSIS**

1. The correct choice is D. This sentence includes the main character and one of the key events—Beowulf’s promise to kill Grendel. It is also an objective statement. Choices A, B, and C include judgments, assumptions, or inaccurate details about King Hrothgar and Grendel.

2. The correct choice is B. This statement accurately explains the events in the story resolution and is objective. Choices A and C do not include enough about key events—Beowulf’s victory or Grendel’s death. Choice D includes a judgment about the defeat of Grendel.

3. Sample response: Long ago in the country of Denmark, a monster called Grendel attacked Heorot Hall and killed many of King Hrothgar’s soldiers. A young warrior named Beowulf vowed to slay the monster. After a fierce battle, Beowulf managed to kill Grendel.

**RETEACHING**

Use a chart to verify the answer to question 2. Draw the chart below, and work with students to fill in the boxes. Sample responses are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting: Heorot Hall</th>
<th>Event: Beowulf and Grendel have a fierce battle.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characters: Beowulf, Grendel</td>
<td>Event: Beowulf defeats Grendel, who flees to the lake and dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary: Beowulf defeats Grendel, who returns to his lake and dies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Integrating Standards**

Use these questions to further students’ understanding of “Beowulf and Grendel.”

1. **How does the setting affect the characters and plot?**
   
   The myth occurs long ago and is set in King Hrothgar’s great hall where his people enjoy feasting, songs, and dancing. Because Grendel hates the noise, songs, and laughter, he kills many of the warriors. This slaughter sets in motion future events in which the hero, Beowulf, must fight the monster to the death.

2. **What can you infer about Beowulf based on the details in the legend?**
   
   Beowulf is strong, brave, and loyal even though he is young. I can infer this because Beowulf is not afraid to sit alone and wait for Grendel or to battle the huge monster.
Part 5: Independent Practice

Read the myth. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Gift from the Heavens**  
by Flora Diaz

1. At one time, the gods lived in the heavens while the mortals toiled on the earth. Zeus, king of all gods, did not look kindly on the mortals. Zeus believed that all heavenly powers belonged only to the gods and goddesses. Prometheus believed that these powers should be shared with the mortals.

2. Prometheus and Zeus were constantly getting into disputes. Once, Prometheus was asked to solve a conflict between the gods and mortal men. The men were going to sacrifice a bull during a festival and they had to decide which parts of the bull should be offered to the gods and which parts should be reserved for the men. Prometheus saw this as an opportunity to play a trick on Zeus. He butchered the bull and put the lean, tasty parts of the meat into a small serving bowl and then placed the gristle, bones, and fat into a much larger serving bowl. When Prometheus asked Zeus to select his meal, naturally he chose the larger portion.

3. When Zeus realized how he had been deceived, he was furious and immediately sought revenge. To punish both Prometheus and the mortals he cared about, Zeus snatched fire away from the men of earth, and kept it only for the gods.

4. During one bitterly cold winter, Prometheus watched the mortals huddle together like a pack of animals to keep warm. "They need to have fire returned to earth," he thought. So he decided to ignore Zeus' decree, no matter the risk. Prometheus lit a torch with the fire from the wheels of the chariot that carried the sun across the sky. He brought the flaming torch to earth and delivered fire to the mortals. As a result, life on earth was transformed. Not only did fire keep people warm, it also enabled them to cook food for the first time, as well as smoke the food and preserve it for later use. With the heat of the fire, they could even smelt metals and turn them into tools to use for farming.

5. The king of the gods was furious when he learned what Prometheus had done. He wanted to punish Prometheus and return the mortals to a life of pain and hardship. So Zeus came up with a plan. He asked the other goddesses to help him create a beautiful, mortal woman. His daughter Athena offered her assistance, and when the lovely creature was fully formed, Athena breathed life into her. Zeus named the woman Pandora, and she possessed unequalled beauty and charm. Zeus gave Pandora an ornate lidded box and sent her to Prometheus as a gift. He told Prometheus that Pandora would make a perfect bride.

6. Prometheus was suspicious of any gift from Zeus, despite the woman's incredible beauty. He suggested to his brother Epimetheus that he marry Pandora instead, which he willingly did. After they were wed, Epimetheus asked his bride what was inside the sealed box.

7. "I don't know," she replied. "I only know that Zeus gave me strict instructions never to open it."

8. "That is most unusual, but I would not trust Zeus. Perhaps we should bury the box," her husband responded.

9. Pandora had never given a thought to what was inside the box until her husband asked her about it. Now she was consumed with curiosity and she could think of nothing else. She wondered what it could be and why Zeus was so determined to keep her from glancing inside. One night, while her husband was sleeping, Pandora pulled the box from its hiding place and cautiously opened the lid.

10. Immediately all manner of dreadful things were released from the box—disease, despair, malice, greed, death, hatred, violence, cruelty, and war. These torments traveled to earth, creating extreme discord and chaos for the mortals.

11. However, without Zeus' knowledge, his daughter Athena had put something else into the box, something that could help the mortals cope with all these miseries—hope. So hope also traveled to earth to serve as a balance to the woes that burden all mortals.

**Part 5: Independent Practice**

**Answer the questions. Mark your answers to questions 1–3 on the Answer Form to the right.**

**Answer Form**

| Question | Correct
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme Connection**

- How do all the passages in this lesson relate to the theme of myths and legends?
- How are the main characters in the myths and legends similar in this lesson? How and why do they differ?
2 Choice C is correct. Pandora tells Epimetheus that Zeus only told her that she should never open it. This is an important event because later Pandora is punished for her disobedience. Choice A is incorrect. Epimetheus does not trust Zeus. Choice B is incorrect. Prometheus brings humans fire, but he did not make them powerful. Choice D is incorrect. Pandora opens the box out of curiosity. (DOK 2)

3 Choice D is correct. This summary includes only the key events. Choice A is incorrect because it includes minor details like the torch and chariot and omits Pandora’s curiosity. Choice B is incorrect because it includes extraneous details such as the bull and omits Epimetheus. Choice C is incorrect because it includes minor details like humans smoking food and omits Epimetheus and Pandora. (DOK 2)

4 Sample response: Prometheus helps humans by trying to protect them from Zeus. He first helps humans trick Zeus so they can keep the best part of the bull sacrifice for themselves. Then, when Zeus takes away humans’ fire, Prometheus brings it back to them. The restoration of fire lets the humans stay warm, cook and preserve food, and make farm equipment from metal. For these reasons, Prometheus protects and provides for humans. (DOK 2)

Integrating Standards

Use these questions and tasks as opportunities to interact with the myth of Pandora’s box.

1 Contrast how Zeus and Prometheus feel about mortals. Cite evidence from the text to explain the differences.

Prometheus is kind to the mortals and believes they should share heavenly powers with gods and goddesses, while Zeus does not look kindly on them and does not believe they should share godly powers. The text states, “Zeus believed that all heavenly powers belonged only to the gods and goddesses. Prometheus believed that these powers should be shared with the mortals.”

2 What does the phrase “consumed with curiosity” in paragraph 9 mean? How does this expression show Pandora feelings and foreshadow what will happen?

It means that Pandora desperately wants to know what is in the box. She is so curious that she can think of nothing else. It foreshadows that she will certainly give in to her impulse and open it.

3 Write about the point of view in this myth. How does it help you understand the story? How might the story change if it were told from a different point of view?

The point of view is third-person. The narrator is an objective observer who tells how each character feels and why they act in certain ways. If it were told in first-person from Pandora’s point of view, the reader would not be given details about the conflict between Zeus and Prometheus nor Zeus’ need for revenge.

4 Discuss in small groups: Why do you think people created myths like this one? Why do they help people explain or understand? How are myths important to cultures?

Discussions will vary. Encourage students to talk about what myths have meant to different cultures, and help them understand that myths were often created to explain things in nature.
**Writing Activities**

**Another Point of View**
- Challenge students to think about how Beowulf might have described his battle with Grendel. How did he feel when he volunteered? How did he feel when he first saw Grendel? What was it like to battle the monster and defeat him?
- Have students rewrite the story of Beowulf and Grendel from Beowulf’s point of view. Encourage students to use descriptive details and dialogue. Allow time for students to share their stories with the class.

**Kinds of Sentences**
- Have students reread the second and third sentence in paragraph 2 of “Gift from the Heavens.” Ask students what kind of sentences these are. (simple, complex) Remind students that a complex sentence is made up of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.
- Explain that writers use a variety of sentence types when they write. Review compound and compound-complex sentences.
- Have students write a paragraph comparing and contrasting myths. Tell them to use all four kinds of sentences at least once.

**LISTENING ACTIVITY**

**Listen Closely/Summarize**
- Have students work in pairs to summarize “Gift from the Heavens.” One student should read aloud the first paragraph and provide a summary that includes a non-objective statement. The other student must listen closely and revise the summary to exclude any bias or opinions.
- Have partners switch roles and repeat the activity until they have summarized the entire myth.

**DISCUSSION ACTIVITY**

**Talk in a Group/Talk About Myths and Legends**
- Ask students to review the heroes, gods, and goddesses they read about in this lesson’s passages. Encourage students to describe other characters from myths or legends with which they are familiar.
- Have students form small groups to discuss the characteristics of heroes, gods, and goddesses in myths and legends. As a group, they should discuss the traits such supernatural characters have in common in these types of stories.
- Allow 10 to 15 minutes for discussion. Then have groups share their results with the class.

**MEDIA ACTIVITY**

**Be Creative/Make a Script**
- Have students review the story “Glooskap and the Wasis.”
- Have students work in small groups to write a script for a play version of this story.
- Then ask groups to perform their scripts for the class. Have students compare and contrast watching and listening to the myth to reading it.

**RESEARCH ACTIVITY**

**Research and Present/Give a Presentation**
- Remind students that “Gift from the Heavens” is an example of Greek mythology, which centers on Greek gods and mortal heroes.
- Have students research more information about Greek mythology and choose the god, goddess, or hero who most interests them. Then have them research that figure and write a presentation.
- Students should include a visual display and explain the attributes represented by that figure as well as summarize a myth featuring him or her.