

# 7th Grade Passages

## Middle of Year (MOY) Student Packet

Passage 1      *An Unusual Job*

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Passage 3      *Greta Von Trombone*

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## An Unusual Job

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Robert Crisman has a big job. He works to keep the faces of four Presidents looking good. He repairs cracks on Abraham Lincoln’s nose. He smoothes the lines on George Washington’s forehead. Of course, Crisman does not work on real Presidents. He works on Mount Rushmore.

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77  
94  
112  
126

What is Mount Rushmore? Mount Rushmore is a mountain in South Dakota. It is made of a very hard rock called granite. The faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt are carved into the side of this mountain. The carvings begin at the top of the mountain. They are about 60 feet tall. They were made as a monument to honor these great Presidents. The carvings make people think about what these leaders stood for — courage, leadership, freedom, and a love of country.

133  
151  
169  
186  
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Why do the carvings need repair? Over time tiny cracks occur in the hard granite. When they first appear, these small cracks are not a problem. But the weather causes some to get bigger. In the winter, rain and melted snow get inside the cracks. When the water freezes, it makes the cracks longer and deeper. When a small crack becomes a large crack, it needs to be repaired. If it is not fixed, pieces of the carvings may break off.

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250  
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284  
302  
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How does Robert Crisman do the repairs? Every September Crisman goes down the side of the mountain to see if anything needs to be repaired. To do this, he first puts on special gear. He uses safety belts like the ones used by people who climb mountains. Then Crisman straps himself into a seat. The seat is fastened to strong ropes. Two people on top of the mountain lower Crisman down. Each year Crisman works on the side of the mountain for four days. Each day he works on a different carving. As Crisman climbs around the huge faces, he carefully checks each one. He inspects the carvings for breaks and chips. If he finds a large crack, he fixes it. Before 1991 Crisman filled in the cracks with a paste that took three years to dry. Then a company made something new for him to use called silicone. The silicone fills up the cracks and dries in just one day.

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414  
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When Crisman first started his job, he did not like to look at the ground so far below him. Now he is used to working up high. He likes his job and knows he is doing something important. About two million people visit Mount Rushmore each year. Robert Crisman’s work helps keep the Presidents’ faces looking good for everyone to see.

## The King's Gold

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The king's castle was only a day's walk from the edge of the forested mountains. Everyone who lived in the area had heard stories of the king's great wealth. One morning the king woke to find that many of his gold coins were missing. He immediately summoned every guard and soldier in his castle.

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"Search the countryside!" demanded the king. "Some of my gold has disappeared, and I want the thief brought to justice. I will greatly reward the one who brings me the wrongdoer." The room quickly cleared as every guard and soldier left to find the guilty person.

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One of the castle guards went to search the king's cocoa plantation. He angrily questioned dozens of workers as they snipped ripe cocoa pods from the trees. Then he marched over to two men who were breaking open cocoa pods and placing the beans in baskets.

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"What are you doing?" the guard asked the first man, who sat quietly next to his basket.

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"I am opening cocoa pods," he answered. "I am weak, so it takes me a long time to fill one basket. I cannot move about as quickly as my partner."

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"I see," snapped the guard. He watched the second man moving busily from one basket to the next and slipping cocoa beans into his pockets. "These two baskets are completely filled with beans. And your pockets are quite heavy."

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"It takes several hundred beans to make a pound of chocolate, so I must work quickly," the second man said, nervously moving away from the guard.

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"Not so fast," the guard ordered. "Empty your pockets!" The man followed the guard's instructions, and hundreds of cocoa beans spilled to the ground.

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"You thief!" the guard shouted. "How dare you steal the king's cocoa beans!"

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"No, please listen. There are not enough baskets," the man stammered. "I don't want to stop working, so I often fill my pockets with beans until the wagon comes. Then I empty everything and begin again."

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“I find your methods extremely questionable,” said the guard. “And you’re as jumpy as a cat.”

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“I am just a simple peasant, and I am not used to being questioned by guards,” the man replied.

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Just then the guard spotted a gold coin lying on the ground between the two men. “Aha! This

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proves it!” shouted the guard as he picked up the coin. “Come with me, thief,” he demanded. “The

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king will want to know where you’ve stashed the rest of the gold.” The guard left hastily with the

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second man. The guard was eager to receive the great reward the king had promised.

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The first man watched until the two men had vanished into the distance. Then he stood up and

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slowly walked away, careful not to spill the heavy gold coins he had hidden in his pockets.

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## Greta Von Trombone

Greta Von Trombone has a special musical ability. She doesn't know who she inherited it from, her mom or her dad, but she thinks it's the greatest part of her personality. Greta plays the trombone and, while some think it's too boyish of an instrument for a girl, she thinks it fits her personality just fine. She loves to play in front of an audience. But she also loves to play alone, because a magical thing happens when she plays her trombone alone.

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When Greta plays Mozart on her trombone by the pantry door, the pantry becomes a whole new world. She can step inside and become anything she wants to be. For instance, one day she entered the pantry and gave the performance of her life as a member of a professional orchestra. Another time, she was whisked into a world where music did not exist. The people had never heard any type of music before. She thought that they looked sad, and she couldn't imagine living in a world without music.

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Her favorite adventure was the time she was called in as a special investigator to find Morris Dorgen's stolen trombone. Morris Dorgen was the country's most famous trombone player, and his trombone was stolen from his house. The police needed help and called Greta. She analyzed the scene, took notes, looked for fingerprints, and searched for any type of evidence that may have been left behind. She noticed a spill in the kitchen of some kind of red juice. The victim did not drink juice, so they assumed it was the burglar's. The only other thing that Greta found that didn't belong to Mr. Dorgen was a receipt bearing the name of a local dry cleaner.

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Greta and the police spoke with the manager, who couldn't be much help because all of the identifying marks on the receipt were missing. They decided to put the shop under surveillance to see if anyone suspicious came in with a red stain on an article of clothing. The manager was to call them if such a client arrived. Later that evening, as Greta and a policeman sat watching the store, a man with a large black case entered with a single item. Greta and the policeman moved closer to the store and waited. The phone call they were expecting came—a man with a red-stained shirt had just entered the shop. As they approached the man, he threw his hands in the air and begged for forgiveness.

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The man was arrested and sentenced to prison. Greta later found out that he had stolen several other musical instruments as well. Nobody ever discovered his motives.

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Greta always looks forward to her next adventure, but she knows that she has many real adventures ahead of her as well. When she grows up she would like to be a professional trombone player or possibly a detective. Maybe, she secretly hopes, she can be both.