

7th Grade Passages

Between MOY and EOY Student Packet

Passage 1 *Caroline Herschel*

Passage 2 *Let's Do It Again*

Passage 3 *The Parthenon*

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Caroline Herschel

Did you know that one of the first women astronomers began her career as a maid?

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Caroline Herschel was one of six children. When Caroline was small, she suffered from a disease called typhus. She recovered, but her growth was permanently stunted. She only grew to be four feet three inches tall. Her father told her that the only thing she could do in life was to be a maid.

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Her brother, William, felt sorry for her. He took her to England to live with him. She was his housekeeper. William had a job as a chorus director. He was very skilled in music. But he really had an interest in astronomy. He began to make very powerful telescopes.

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Soon, people realized how well-made his telescopes were. He began making and selling them. He quit his chorus job. William became very respected in the field of astronomy. He even discovered Uranus.

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Caroline spent years watching her brother. She began to develop an interest in astronomy too. She learned all she could from him. Soon, she was helping him build telescopes. She kept wonderful notes about their observations.

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William even gave her her own telescope. He knew she would want to make observations on her own.

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Her first big accomplishment came when she discovered a comet. She would go on to discover 7 more.

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Caroline won several awards for her work in astronomy. She was even honored in other countries, including Germany and Prussia. In 1835, she became an honorary member of the Royal Astronomical Society. She was one of the first women to achieve this goal.

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Caroline lived to be 98 years old. She had many friends. When she died, everyone who knew her was sad.

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Let's Do It Again

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My heart was beating so loudly that I was sure everyone could hear it over the slow rumbling of the motor. I jumped into the water and put on my skis. Slowly the boat crept forward, tightening up the ski rope. I held on for dear life to the handle on the end of the rope while Mom smiled encouragingly at me from the back of the boat.

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I was trying very hard to recover my earlier feelings of excitement about learning to water-ski. “Whose bright idea was this anyway?” I asked myself anxiously. I sat in the cool water bobbing gently in my bright orange life jacket. I tried to keep the tips of my water skis pointing up out of the water as I had been shown. A wave of fear washed over me. There were just too many instructions to remember. My little sister Nikki cheered as she jumped up and down in the back of the boat next to Mom.

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Nikki had learned to water-ski at a very young age. I, on the other hand, always liked underwater sports such as scuba diving. Moving on top of the water was going to be very different for me. But once I mastered this, we would have another activity that the whole family could enjoy together.

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“Deep breath,” I reminded myself. Dad pulled back the lever to open up the throttle. The motor roared to life. “Here we go,” I thought wildly.

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Mom gave me a big thumbs-up, and the boat lurched forward and gave a mighty pull. I pushed up on my legs as hard as I could and let out a yell. I was actually standing on my skis, skimming across the water, but not for long. I fell forward and landed facedown in the water. Thank goodness I remembered to let go of the rope. My skis came off, and my life jacket kept me floating on the surface of the lake.

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“I don’t believe it,” I thought, flipping over to my back with a grin. “I almost felt like I was flying.”

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“Let’s do it again,” I called to Dad as he circled the boat around to pick me up.

The Parthenon

The Parthenon, a building in Athens, Greece, is perhaps one of the most memorable structures on Earth. Built 25 centuries ago, it is one of the great architectural achievements of the ancient world. There are many reasons for its greatness.

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Athens was the most important city in ancient Greece. In 480 B.C. Greece was under attack by both the Persian army and the Persian navy. The Athenian commander, Themistocles, knew that his forces could not defeat the Persian army then marching toward Athens. Hoping instead to make a stand against the Persians at sea, Themistocles and his forces fled Athens for a nearby island. Although the Persian army overwhelmed Athens and left it in ruins, the Greek navy, led by Themistocles, annihilated the Persian fleet. This victory by the Greeks led all Persian forces to retreat within one year. About 30 years later the building of the Parthenon began. Construction took place between 447 and 432 B.C. during the rule of Pericles. The Parthenon was constructed on the same site as an unfinished structure intended to honor the men who had lost their lives in an earlier battle against the Persians. The Parthenon would stand as a symbol of the strength and importance of the Greek people.

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Many important cities in ancient Greece had an acropolis, or “high city,” on which people constructed important buildings. The acropolis was the highest and most defensible location, so it also served as a fortress in the event of enemy attack. The Parthenon is located about 500 feet above the city of Athens. Before the Parthenon could be built, some areas of the acropolis had to be leveled down, and other areas had to be built up. Then a large, solid foundation was constructed out of limestone blocks. The entire area was buttressed by a reinforcing wall.

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The Parthenon is a rectangular structure consisting of two inner areas surrounded by columns. There are eight columns at each end and seventeen columns along each side. It is a large structure, considering when it was built. It is about 200 feet long and about 100 feet wide. It stands about 60 feet high.

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One extraordinary aspect of the Parthenon is its construction. It required between 20,000 and 30,000 tons of marble that had to be precisely carved so that huge blocks of it could be fitted together without mortar to form the columns and the interior walls.

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Perhaps even more impressive are the “optical corrections” that were used. The columns bulge slightly in the middle because experience had shown the Greeks that perfectly straight columns would not look straight to the viewer. Because corner columns normally appear smaller than

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others, the corner columns of the Parthenon were made slightly thicker and were placed closer to the other columns. The columns were also designed to lean inward slightly because perfectly perpendicular columns seem to slant outward. Furthermore, the platform on which the Parthenon sits was made to curve upward in the middle because a perfectly level floor would appear to sag in the center.

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The Parthenon stands today despite the centuries that have passed. It is a timeless tribute to the enduring culture of the Greek people and is considered a model of excellence in concept and construction. It established the classic style of architecture seen today in many public buildings, such as the White House and the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. This architectural style is a lasting gift from the ancient Greeks to the modern world.