

7th Grade Passages

Middle of Year (MOY) Student Packet

Passage 1 *An Unusual Job*

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An Unusual Job

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

46 What is Mount Rushmore? Mount Rushmore is a
54 mountain in South Dakota. It is made of a very
64 hard rock called granite. The faces of George
72 Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln,
77 and Theodore Roosevelt are carved into the side
85 of this mountain. The carvings begin at the top
94 of the mountain. They are about 60 feet tall.
103 They were made as a monument to honor these
112 great Presidents. The carvings make people think

119 about what these leaders stood for — courage,
126 leadership, freedom, and a love of country.

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

214 How does Robert Crisman do the repairs? Every
222 September Crisman goes down the side of the
230 mountain to see if anything needs to be repaired.
239 To do this, he first puts on special gear. He uses
250 safety belts like the ones used by people who climb
260 mountains. Then Crisman straps himself into a seat.
268 The seat is fastened to strong ropes. Two people on

278 top of the mountain lower Crisman down. Each year
287 Crisman works on the side of the mountain for four
297 days. Each day he works on a different carving. As
307 Crisman climbs around the huge faces, he carefully
315 checks each one. He inspects the carvings for
323 breaks and chips. If he finds a large crack, he fixes
334 it. Before 1991 Crisman filled in the cracks with a
344 paste that took three years to dry. Then a company
354 made something new for him to use called silicone.
363 The silicone fills up the cracks and dries in just one
374 day.

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

436

The King's Gold

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

331 "I find your methods extremely questionable," said
338 the guard. "And you're as jumpy as a cat."

347 "I am just a simple peasant, and I am not used to
359 being questioned by guards," the man replied.

366 Just then the guard spotted a gold coin lying on the
377 ground between the two men. "Aha! This proves it!"
386 shouted the guard as he picked up the coin. "Come
396 with me, thief," he demanded. "The king will want
405 to know where you've stashed the rest of the gold."

415 The guard left hastily with the second man. The
424 guard was eager to receive the great reward the
433 king had promised.

436 The first man watched until the two men had
445 vanished into the distance. Then he stood up and
454 slowly walked away, careful not to spill the heavy
463 gold coins he had hidden in his pockets.

471

Greta Von Trombone

Greta Von Trombone has a special musical ability.

8 She doesn't know who she inherited it from,

16 her mom or her dad, but she thinks it's the

26 greatest part of her personality. Greta plays the

34 trombone and, while some think it's too boyish

42 of an instrument for a girl, she thinks it fits her

53 personality just fine. She loves to play in front

62 of an audience. But she also loves to play alone,

72 because a magical thing happens when she plays

80 her trombone alone.

83 When Greta plays Mozart on her trombone by the

92 pantry door, the pantry becomes a whole new

100 world. She can step inside and become anything

108 she wants to be. For instance, one day she entered

118 the pantry and gave the performance of her life

127 as a member of a professional orchestra. Another
135 time, she was whisked into a world where music
144 did not exist. The people had never heard any type
154 of music before. She thought that they looked sad,
163 and she couldn't imagine living in a world without
172 music.

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

278 was a receipt bearing the name of a local dry
288 cleaner.

289 Greta and the police spoke with the manager,
297 who couldn't be much help because all of the
306 identifying marks on the receipt were missing.

313 They decided to put the shop under surveillance to
322 see if anyone suspicious came in with a red stain
332 on an article of clothing. The manager was to call
342 them if such a client arrived. Later that evening,
351 as Greta and a policeman sat watching the store,
360 a man with a large black case entered with a single
371 item. Greta and the policeman moved closer to
379 the store and waited. The phone call they were
388 expecting came—a man with a red-stained shirt
397 had just entered the shop. As they approached the
406 man, he threw his hands in the air and begged for
417 forgiveness.

418 The man was arrested and sentenced to prison.

426 Greta later found out that he had stolen several

435 other musical instruments as well. Nobody ever

442 discovered his motives.

445 Greta always looks forward to her next adventure,

453 but she knows that she has many real adventures

462 ahead of her as well. When she grows up she

472 would like to be a professional trombone player or

481 possibly a detective. Maybe, she secretly hopes,

488 she can be both.

492