

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Confronting Challenges.”

We are kicking off our sixth unit in the Benchmark Advance program. As with the previous units, I am providing suggested activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In our sixth unit of study, “Confronting Challenges,” we will read and compare a variety of genres to understand how characters in fiction overcome challenges and face obstacles. We will be reading a variety of genres, including legends, folktales, and myths.

This unit will allow you and your child to consider what kinds of traits make up a hero, and how average, everyday people have the traits of courageous heroes.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Confronting Challenges

The thing that draws us to good fiction stories is how characters handle the challenges they face. In this unit, we read and compare stories to understand the daunting challenges that characters endure. We will do this by thinking about the question “How do we overcome obstacles?” Here are some activities you can do at home to continue the conversation we started at school.

Topic Connection

Conflict Map

Students are reading stories about confronting challenges and solving problems. Read a fictional story with your child and map out the conflicts that the main character faces. Fold a piece of paper into four columns and label the columns “Problem,” “Feelings,” “Actions,” and “Solution.” Fill out the chart for the book you are reading, to identify how the character in the book confronted a challenge and the feelings the character experienced along the way.

Vocabulary Connection

Word Sort

In school, your child is learning words that writers use while storytelling. Some words name actions, while others describe words. Write the following words on their own scraps of paper: **generous, nimble, burden, fatigue, misfortune, impatient, valor, scarce, animated, and attracted.** Fold each paper, put it in a bowl, and shake the bowl. Have your child pull out the scraps one by one and place them on one of two plates, marked “Action” or “Description.” Have your child place any words that can fall under both categories between the two plates.

Comprehension Connection

The Challenges of Youth

In this unit, students read about fictional characters who face challenges. Talk with your child about some of the challenges he or she faces due to being young. Make a list of the challenges. For each one, discuss how some characters in fictional stories might handle their problems and overcome their obstacles. Talk about whether any of these approaches is a good solution for a child to explore. Discuss why or why not, and come up with at least one possible solution for overcoming some of the challenges of childhood.

Word Study Connections

It’s a Burden!

What better word to focus on in a unit about challenges than the word *burden*? Draw a word web with the word *burden* in the center oval. Ask your child to fill in additional bubbles extending out from the center oval with synonyms for the word. Once they have found as many words as possible, have them use *burden* in a sentence and experiment to see if any of their synonyms can be used in the sentence as a replacement for the word.