

Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC

Academic Resource Packet

Middle School



**Big Brothers Big Sisters
of New York City**

THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES®

Table of Contents

3 // MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

4 // BIG TIPS

8 // SUGGESTED ACADEMIC OUTINGS

10 // COLLEGE READY STUDENT
PROFILES BY GRADE

24 // ACADEMIC TIMELINE

25 // SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

26 // NOTES



Dear Bigs,

Thank you for serving as a volunteer mentor at Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City! The time and friendship that you give makes a difference in the life of a child, and we are honored that you have chosen to be an integral part of our BBBS of NYC family.

Like you, we are committed to helping your Little achieve success in life and we are confident that by working together, we can make great strides towards that vision. We both know that a critical component to that work lies in our ability to meet the academic needs of the young person you are mentoring. This may sound like a daunting task, but I assure you that you are not alone in this. Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC prides itself in being a mentoring organization with a strong education focus, and we will provide you with all the guidance and resources needed.

We provide academic programming in several ways. Our Education Initiative offers extensive college readiness programming for Littles. We introduced SMART goals to ensure that all matches have specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound goals around academic achievement, self-confidence, relationship building, and resiliency. We also recently launched the Bigs Education Council, an affinity group devoted to raising scholarship money for graduating seniors, enhancing and supporting our education programming, and spreading the word about the Education Initiative to other Bigs.

We understand that the New York City education system can be difficult to navigate and there is a tremendous amount of information that can often be confusing or overwhelming. Because you are among the biggest advocates and strongest champions for our Littles, we strive to empower you with the information you need to understand what it takes to be academically successful in the nation's largest school district.

This Academic Resource Packet includes valuable information that we hope you will find helpful in your efforts to support your Little on their journey to becoming college aware and ready. It includes a profile for a college ready student, elements of the new English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core standards, behavioral and cognitive developmental markers for students within your Little's age group, a yearly academic timeline, and suggested academic outings. Just as mentoring is a powerful tool in making an impact on the overall wellbeing of your Little, this packet will show you how mentoring can also be a powerful tool in making an impact on the academic performance of your Little.

We welcome your feedback on this packet and on our overall academic support efforts. I invite you to learn more about our Education Initiative on our website at www.bigsnyc.org/littles.

Sincerely,

Hector Batista, CEO
Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC

Big Tips: Putting It Into Practice

Bigs, throughout this packet we offer mentoring pointers to help you on your journey to supporting your Little’s academic performance in your match relationship. You’ll find that many of the tips connect to one another. Take your time reading through them. We hope you find it beneficial. Please provide feedback so we can improve on our support.

New To Your Match?

Don’t force academic conversations so quickly. Our SMART goals will help make them more obvious factors in your match relationship but your Little will struggle with sharing if they are not doing so well in school. They might not want to talk about academic barriers or obstacles. If you bring it up, and they do not respond so positively, either through body language or verbal cues, don’t force it. Instead, focus on celebrating the small successes they do share. The more you celebrate the good things and build rapport, the more room you will have to check-in around academic obstacles.

Sample Everyday Teaching Moments.

Sometimes making it strictly about academics is overwhelming. It is okay to sneak in learning through every day match outings. Make learning cool.

EXAMPLES:

Math Teachable Moment(s) –

A Little and Big go to the grocery store. The Big hands the cashier a 10 dollar bill for an item that cost 2.99. The Big can ask the Little, “How much change should I get back?”
Have your Little calculate the tip on a bill.
Take your Little to a cooking class that involves loads of measurements. Have them calculate the measurements and measure a cup of water in a measuring cup the proper way.

Literacy/Math Teachable Moment –

A Little and Big love basketball. Pull up the basketball stats from all of last week’s games. Talk about them in depth. Have your Little analyze the stats. Get your Little to understand more than the plays. Encourage your Little to think about strategy.

Science Teachable Moment –

Go to Coney Island and collect seashells and rocks. Have a conversation about nature and the rocks and seashell as it relates to density and other types rocks. (Then go have some fun at the Coney Island Amusement Park!)

Social Studies Teachable Moment –

Go visit historical sites. Do a scavenger hunt; try to find several key elements to different sites and design an awesome end-of-the-day picture collage with your Little. Put the pictures together and send it your Little and Program Manager. While you’re at it, if you’re feeling silly, record reenactment videos with you and your Little at the different sites. Make it fun!

**For more tips on match outings, see our suggested match outings handout.*

Demonstrate genuine curiosity.

Learn more about your Little’s struggles, interests, life and even their celebrations. If your Little is academically struggling, help them to identify their particular roadblocks in a non-judgmental way by being curious in tone and by asking open ended questions. There could be a range of reasons as to why your Little is not doing well and they may or may not feel ashamed for not being able to achieve academic success. When judgment is placed in the context of asking, it can feel judgmental; that is risky to do especially in a new match relationship. It is also important to make sure your line of questioning does not read or feel like an interview. All of this can make your Little shut down and retreat. Sometimes, Littles will suggest they are doing “good” academically. Good can mean many things. Ask clarifying questions to get a better understanding of what they mean by good.

EXAMPLE:

Big: Gail, what does good mean? A 65, 75 or an 80?

Dreaming Big.

Help your Little dream BIG by helping them think about what’s possible in the future. Ask them to visualize what’s possible and then talk about it. Have them act it out. Get playful and silly. The more you do this, the more space you give them to dream bigger.

Metaphors.

Use metaphors to help turn lessons into new knowledge and make experiences relatable and digestible.

Success is relative.

Manage your expectations. Your definition of success may not be to what your Little is accustomed. Remember to meet your Little where they are. This does not mean you do not hold your Little to high expectations. It just means you recognize that everyone may not have the same experiences. What is common for you, might not be common for your Little.

EXAMPLE:

Your Little constantly gets a 55 in math. Their SMART goal was to pass math class. You check-in at the 2 month mark and they tell you they got a 60, 5 points away from passing. This is something to celebrate. Celebrate it in a fun or even silly way.

Then follow-up with these questions:

What did you do this time to get a 60? What worked for you? Did you try your hardest? What could we add to what you already did to get you to a 65? If your Little can honestly say they tried their best, then you might need to help your Little figure out if the material is just not understandable. It may be that they need tutoring. If your Little states that they did not try their hardest, then you can ask, “What would your best look like?”.

This follow-up question allows your Little to describe tangible action items they can work on while forcing them to visualize a better version of themselves. They then set higher expectations for themselves.

Hold Your Little Accountable.

We all need accountability buddies sometimes. Create clear accountability structures so your Little can really move to the next level.

EXAMPLE:

Tell me more about it (the situation or challenge).

What role did you play in getting the outcome you received? (Ask them to be honest, as their honesty will only help the both of you develop real solutions that work.)

What can you do differently to achieve success?

Have them develop 3 tangible action items they can implement.
How will I know? (How will the Little communicate the implementation of their action plan to you?)
When can I check-in with you around this goal?

(You want to hold them to a clear roll out date and a clear check-in date. You must check-in when and how you say you will. If they are making progress, be sure to celebrate that progress even if via text message. Inform the Little that you will check-in by a certain date and let them know that you will hold them accountable to their success. Get their buy-in around this so when you do it, they can’t push back as much.)

What can I do to support you on your journey to success?

(Only commit to something that you can realistically do.)

Or, how do you celebrate your success?

(Fold a celebration into a match outing. Have your Little tell you how they want to celebrate. You can negotiate the celebration to make sense for you as well but make sure they set the initial parameters.)

**With accountability, it is important that even if your Little does not keep their word, that you do. Consistency on your part helps build trust. That trust will eventually yield loyalty and support the foundation of your match relationship.*

Buy-In.

It is important to get your Little’s buy-in on anything related to their goals and academic progress. If someone else creates it, they are not going to be as moved to do it. The latter approach makes holding them accountable much more difficult.

Celebrations.

Celebrate the small victories as well as the large ones. Make a fun scene. Don’t be afraid to even be a little embarrassing. High five them. Send them a power punch emoji text message celebrating them. Also find ways to fold celebrations into your match outings when Littles accomplish BIG goals. Do this while recognizing and understanding if your Little does not respond well to grandiose verbal gestures. However, even the quiet ones like to feel celebrated. It makes them feel seen.

Bullying Prevention Tips.

The DOE has great sources on how to handle bullying, how to prevent it, and how to avoid it. Visit www.schools.nyc.gov and browse documents like: “Bullying Prevention and Intervention Tips,” “The Anti-Defamation League,” and “Common views and Myths About Bullying.”

SAT/ACT Prep.

In partnership with private tutoring company Signet Education, we offer ACT/SAT Prep at the agency two times a year. Please sign your Little up especially if they are in the 11th grade. Contact the Education Initiative department at education@bigsnyc.org to learn more about all of the opportunities we offer. We offer 10 – 15 college readiness workshops annually, including SAT/ACT prep.

Reading With Your Little.

Bigs, read the Little’s required school text with them. This is a great way to meet your Little where they are and to help them develop their reflection skills on the text. Spend 10 – 30 minutes on a match outing talking about the book. Get them to share their thoughts and engage in a regular dialogue about it. Maybe even send them a text message highlighting an exciting part of the book and gently assert your excitement about the book in everyday conversations.

Contacting Your Little’s School.

Sometimes, the best way to find out about the assigned reading list and major school calendar dates not found on the general Department of Education calendar is by calling the school directly. Let your Little’s parent know you are going to call the school and tell them why. Schools will not release individual student information unless someone is the guardian but at least the parent knows you are going to call. You should ask the school for a generic reading list.

Here is a sample phone script you can use to get some information from the school about what your Little is learning:

Hi _____, I am a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC and _____ is my mentee and _____ (guardian’s name), their parent, informed me that I could call to learn more about what the __ grade is learning in English Language Arts class. Is it possible to get a copy of the reading list or maybe even a syllabus/course outline so I can read the assigned books along with my mentee? I am eager to support their learning.



Suggested Academic Outings for Elementary Littles

When planning match activities for you and your Little, try to find activities that help your Little work towards their SMART goals. Find activities that get them one step closer to improving their Academics, Behavior, Relationships and Self-confidence.

Take advantage of this time with your Little to really identify their academic needs. Have a goal of teaching your Little something at each of your match outings.

And remember, always be sure to have your Little’s parent’s permission before taking them to any activity.

Attend a High School Fair or High School Open House with your Little.

Have your Little make a list of the characteristics they are looking for in their high school of choice. Help them identify those characteristic during a school tour and/or the high school fair. Make sure your Little signs the sign-in for every school they visit. It will help them in the admissions process, if they decide that school is one of their top choices. Take the time to also mention your own high school experiences and advise your Little on what they should or shouldn’t do in order to have a successful high school career.

The New York City High School Fair takes place on Saturday, September 24, 2016 and Sunday, 25, 2016. For more information, please visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/events/default.htm>.

Get a Library Card with your Little.

Choose a book to read together. During your phone conversations or meetings, follow up on your Little’s progress with the book (you can choose from the recommended reading list on the “Profiles for a Successful College Ready Student”). You can keep them accountable for the due dates of these books and begin to teach them responsibility. This activity underscores foundational reading Common Core literacy learning standards.

Visit your Alma Mater with your Little (if it is in NYC).

Take the time to reiterate the importance of college to your Little. Have them start thinking about their college future-even if they’re still a couple of years away. Talk about the classes you took and the extracurriculars you participated in. This activity supports the overarching college readiness goal of the Common Core learning standards by introducing deeper awareness of the college experience to your Little.

Take your Little to a Museum.

Explain to your Little the purpose of museums and their significance. Help your Little choose one interesting exhibit and research it more when he or she gets home. Follow up with them to see what they were able to find. Encourage them to continue to explore different areas of interest. NYC has multiple museums with free admissions. See [www. nycgo.com](http://www.nycgo.com). This activity underscores the integration of knowledge and ideas and reading informational texts Common Core literacy learning standards.

Volunteer with your Little.

Teach your Little the importance of giving back to the community. Besides programs offered by the DOE, do small projects such as participating in a can drive or planting a tree. These are good skills to get them college ready. For more information on volunteer service days go to www.newyorkcares.org.

Attend Shakespeare in the Park.

Have a conversation with your Little about the theme of the play and how he or she can relate it to their own life. Shows usually begin after 6 pm so make sure to have parent’s consent to take the Little out this late. This activity underscores the foundational listening Common Core learning standards. If your Little has previously read a Shakespeare play, it can additionally support the comprehension and collaboration Common Core literacy learning standards,.

Go to a Sports game at your Alma Mater (if it is in NYC).

As mentioned earlier, make sure to highlight the great times and aspects of your own college career with your Little. Paint college as a necessity for their future-not an option. If your alma mater is not in New York City, you can always go visit a New York City school with your Little. Find out what their sports schedule looks like. This activity supports the overarching college readiness goal of the Common Core learning standards by introducing deeper awareness of the college experience to your Little.

Attend a Comic Book Convention.

Have a conversation with your Little about what they enjoy or dislike about comic books. Who is there favorite superhero? Why? What good characteristics of these superheroes could they emulate in their daily lives? This activity underscores the reading and knowledge of language Common Core literacy learning standards.

Common Core Standards for English Language Arts (ELA)

In the following pages, you will find a profile of a successful college ready student for each grade level, along with the ELA Common Core Standards, also at each grade level. The Common Core is a set of high-quality academic standards accepted by forty-two states, including New York. These learning goals outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. The standards were created to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life.

Literacy skills are critical for all young people to develop. They are utilized in all core subjects. When they are properly developed and supported, literacy skills contribute greatly towards a child’s ability to be successful.

For a more comprehensive list of all the Common Core standards for all of the subjects, please visit http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/.

Important Notes

When applying to high school, middle school students have lots of options. Students rank their list of 12 schools and are matched to one. Eligibility is determined by Community Fit (student culture, special education supports), classroom design preferences, GPA, exam scores and commute.

Depending on the school, admissions criteria may include interviews, screenings, auditions, test scores, attendance/punctuality, writing sample, etc. Applications are due in early December.

It is recommended that students begin preparing during their 6th and 7th grade years. 7th grade is an important year because most admissions officers look at a student’s final 7th grade academic record. Other highly sought public schools evaluate ONLY based on 7th grade’s testing and attendance. If a student wishes to have a stronger chance at gaining admission to a high school, they should attend the high school fair in October and sign their name on the signup sheets. They should additionally attend any open houses or additional events the schools of their choice offer so they can increase their chance of admission.

Formal preparation begins in summer and fall of 8th grade. Besides public schools, students also have the options to go to specialized or charter high schools.

More than 25,000 students take the specialized science high school entrance exam (SHSAT) to vie for 5,000 seats at the specialized high schools, also called the exam schools. The exam is given early on a Saturday morning in October. There are nine specialized high schools; eight use the entrance exam. The ninth specialized high school is LaGuardia High School for Music and Art and Performing Arts, and entrance is by audition. The exam schools are:

- Stuyvesant
- High School for Math Science and Engineering at City College
- Bronx Science
- Brooklyn Tech
- Brooklyn Latin
- High School of American Studies at Lehman College
- Queens High School of Science at York College
- Staten Island Technical School

Your Little can request a ticket for the exam from his/her counselor in September. The city offers a free test prep class for eligible students, called the DREAM Specialized High School Institute, which begins in sixth grade.

Charter and boarding schools require separate applications.

For students who don’t get matched during the first round of applications, schools hold a round 2. However, selections are limited! Your Little’s 2nd choice eliminates his/her first. Your Little can appeal all acceptances, but he/she must present extreme circumstances for transfers and appeals (i.e., medical, safety, commutes over 75 minutes).

Profile of a Successful College Ready Student

College and Career Readiness Standards

These standards apply to ALL NYC public school students.

Attendance

At least a 95% attendance rate (no more than 10 absences for the school year)

Note: Excessive absences can affect a student’s grade so attendance must be taken seriously. When a student misses class, they miss out on important teaching and learning. Absences may be excused—but are not eliminated—for religious observance, illness, or other reasons defined at each school.

Research shows that missing 10 percent of school, or about 18 days in most school districts, negatively affects a student’s academic performance. That’s just two days a month and that’s known as chronic absenteeism.

Behavioral Expectations

Students are expected to . . .

- Have no suspensions
- Not engage in verbally rude or disrespectful behavior
- Wear the dress code
- Have viable excuses for any lateness or absence (i.e. doctor’s note)
- Not bring prohibited equipment without permission (electronics, cell phones, etc.)

For more information on the New York City Department of Education Discipline Code please visit: www.schools.nyc.gov



Profile of a Successful College Ready 6th Grade Student

College and Career Readiness Standards

Test Scores

Achieve Level 3 or 4 on the English Language Arts and Math State Exams

Academic Expectations

Depending on your Little’s school’s grading scale, he/she is meeting college ready standards if he/she scores...

- On an Alpha Scale :A or B
- On a Numeric scale: 80+
- On an E-N scale: E or G
- On an ME-MB: ME or MA

It is recommended that your Little:

- Takes Honors Courses
- Participates in at least 1 extra-curricular activity: School Club, Sports Team, or Student Government

Important Notes

Middle School Applications: Public (zoned), Charter an Boarding Schools

Public Middle School: After submitting an application by December, fifth grade students are matched to a program based on student preference, seat availability, specific admissions methods (talent test, interview, etc.), and schools admissions properties (priority based on zone). Results are released in May.

- 4: Excel in standards
- 3: Proficient in standards
- 2: Partially proficient in standards
- 1: Well below proficient in standards

A: 95+	E: Excellent	ME: Exceed Standards
B: 85+	G: Good	MA: Above Standards
C: 75+	S: Satisfactory	MT: Meets Standards
D: 65+	N: Needs improvement	MP: Approaching Standards
F: 55+	U: Unsatisfactory	MB: Below Standards

For Boarding School: Junior Boarding Schools are independent elementary and middle schools with a boarding program for middle school students. Junior Boarding schools are recommended for students who require teachers who work hand in hand with students and invests in their full potential. Boarding Schools are also well suited for students who excel academically, or in the arts, athletics and leadership but need more structure in their day to focus on developing academic potential.

For more information on boarding schools visit <http://www.jbsa.org/>.
For more information on how to apply to junior boarding schools visit <http://www.prepforprep.org/>.

Sixth Grade ELA Common Core Standards

Literature

Key Ideas and Details:

1. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details

Craft and Structure:

1. Explain how an author’s geographic location or culture affects his or her perspective

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

1. Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

1. Read and comprehend literature, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range

Responding to Literature:

1. Recognize, interpret, and make connections in narratives ethically and artistically to other cultural perspectives, eras, personal events, and situations
2. Use established criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces

Writing

Text Types and Purposes:

1. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text

Production and Distribution of Writing:

1. Produce text (print or non-print) that explores a variety of cultures and perspectives

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

1. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others

Range of Writing:

1. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences

Responding to Literature:

1. Recognize and illustrate social, historical, and cultural features in the presentation of literary texts

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration:

1. Seek to understand and communicate with individuals from different perspectives and cultural backgrounds
2. Use their experience and their knowledge of language and logic, as well as culture, to think analytically, address problems creatively, and advocate persuasively

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

1. Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation

Language

Conventions of Standard English:

1. Recognize variations from Standard English in their own and others’ writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language

Knowledge of Language:

1. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening
 - a. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style
 - b. Maintain consistency in style and tone

Vocabulary and Acquisitions and Use:

1. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech



Is Your Little on Track? 6th Grade

Big Tip:

Join your Little and their parent at a parent teacher conference. Take the opportunity to learn a lot more about your Little's academic standing. Observe and listen to what teachers have to say. Ask resource-based questions. I.e. What activities can the Little attend to support with that learning need?

September	• First Day of School	○
October	• Join a Club or Team • Launch of BBBS of NYC Bigs Education Webinars • Launch of BBBS of NYC One-on-One Tutoring Program • High School Admissions Workshop • BBBS of NYC Parent and Bigs Education Orientation • Launch of BBBS of NYC Academic Missions and Journeys for Matches • Launch of BBBS of NYC Show Us Your Academic Swag Questions Campaign	
November	• Parent Teacher Conferences	
December	• Look for SHSAT (The Specialized High School Admissions Test) and Regents Test Prep Programs	
January	• Mid-year Exams	
February	• Research Junior Boarding School and Summer Programming Options	
March	• Parent Teacher Conferences	
April	• Cornerstone Program Enrollment • NY English Language Arts and Math State Exams • BBBS of NYC Academic Recognition Applications Due	
May	• Apply/Enroll to College Summer Programs	
June	• Last Day of School • BBBS of NYC Academic Recognition Ceremony • Summer Slide Launch at BBBS of NYC	
July	• Summer School Begins NYC Summer Quest begins • Beacon Youth Program • Cornerstone Program	
August	• Summer School Ends • NYC Summer Quest Ends • Beacon Youth Program • Cornerstone Program	○ ○

Worried about your Little/
child's first day? Not sure
what to expect?
See "Profile of a Successful
College Ready Student" to
plan out your Little/child's
schedule and schedule for
the year!

It's never too early to get some test practice. This way, your Little will be a pro by 8th grade!

Did you know?

Over the summer, students lose over 2/3's of what they learned over the year. That's why summer programs are valuable. Go for Honors!

Make sure your Little/child has their school supplies ready. School's around the corner!

Want some more summer options? Check out “Profile of a Successful College Ready Student” for more options.

NOTES

Profile of a Successful College Ready 7th Grade Student

College and Career Readiness Standards

Test Scores

Achieve Level 3 or 4 on the English Language Arts and Math State Exams

Academic Expectations

Depending on your Little’s school’s grading scale, he/she is meeting college ready standards if he/she scores...

- On an Alpha Scale :A or B
- On a Numeric scale: 80+
- On an E-N scale: E or G
- On an ME-MB: ME or MA

It is recommended that your Little:

- Takes Honors Courses
- Participates in at least 1 extra-curricular activity: School Club, Sports Team, or Student Government

For more details visit: <http://schools.nyc.gov>

Extra Testing

If your Little’s school offers it...

- Regents Exams: Algebra, Geometry, Living Environment, Earth Science... (if Littles pass them with a 65 or higher, they will count towards high school credit)

- 4: Excel in standards
- 3: Proficient in standards
- 2: Partially proficient in standards
- 1: Well below proficient in standards

A: 95+	E: Excellent	ME: Exceed Standards
B: 85+	G: Good	MA: Above Standards
C: 75+	S: Satisfactory	MT: Meets Standards
D: 65+	N: Needs improvement	MP: Approaching Standards
F: 55+	U: Unsatisfactory	MB: Below Standards

Important Notes

7th grade is the main focus for High School Admission officers, so it is important that your Little does his/her best in middle school.

Seventh Grade ELA Common Core Standards

Literature

Key Ideas and Details:

1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text

Craft and Structure:

1. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters in a text; analyze stories, drama, or poems by authors who represent diverse world cultures

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

1. Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

1. Read and comprehend literature in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range

Responding to Literature:

1. Self-select text based on personal preferences
2. Use established criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces

Writing

Text Types and Purposes:

1. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically

Production and Distribution of Writing:

1. Produce clear and coherent writing; produce text (print or non-print) that explores a variety of cultures and perspectives

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

1. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation

Range of Writing:

1. Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences

Responding to Literature:

1. Create a presentation, art work, or text in response to a literary work with a commentary that identifies connections
2. Make deliberate, personal, cultural, textual, and thematic connections across genres

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration:

1. Seek to understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from varied backgrounds
2. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others’ questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

1. Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points

Language

Conventions of Standard English:

1. Choose among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas

Knowledge of Language:

1. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy

Vocabulary and Acquisitions and Use:

1. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph, a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase
2. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech



Is Your Little on Track? 7th Grade

Big Tip:

Join your Little and their parent at a parent teacher conference. Take the opportunity to learn a lot more about your Little's academic standing. Observe and listen to what teachers have to say. Ask resource-based questions. I.e. What activities can the Little attend to support with that learning need?

September	• First Day of School	
October	• Visit High School Open Houses • Launch of BBBS of NYC Bigs Education Webinars • Launch of BBBS of NYC One-on-One Tutoring Program • High School Admissions Workshop • BBBS of NYC Parent and Bigs Education Orientation • Launch of BBBS of NYC Academic Missions and Journeys for Matches • Launch of BBBS of NYC Show Us Your Academic Swag Questions Campaign	
November	• Parent Teacher Conferences • Attend High School Fairs and Open Houses • BBBS of NYC Middle School College Trip	
December	• Look for SHSAT (The Specialized High School Admissions Test) and Regents Test Prep Programs	
January	• NY State Regents	
February	• Research and Apply for Junior Boarding School (See “Profile of a College Ready Student” for more information) • BBBS of NYC Middle School College Trip	
March	• Parent Teacher Conferences • BBBS of NYC Middle School College Trip	
April	• Cornerstone Summer Program Enrollment • NY English Language Arts and Math State Exams • BBBS of NYC Academic Recognition Applications Due	
May	• Apply/Enroll to College Summer Programs	
June	• NY State Regents • Last Day of School • BBBS of NYC Academic Recognition Ceremony • Summer Slide Launch at BBBS of NYC	
July	• Summer School Begins NYC Summer Quest begins • Beacon Youth Program • Cornerstone Program	
August	• Summer School Ends • NYC Summer Quest Ends • Beacon Youth Program • Cornerstone Program	 

Worried about your Little/
child's first day? Not sure
what to expect?
See "Profile of a Successful
College Ready Student" to
plan out your Little/child's
schedule and schedule for
the year!

It's never too early to get some test practice. This way, your Little will be a pro by 8th grade!

Did you know?

Over the summer, students lose over 2/3's of what they learned over the year. That's why summer programs are valuable. Go for Honors!

Big Tip: If your child/Little is interested in a Performing Arts School, encourage them to start exploring arts programming and building a portfolio in the 7th grade.

Make sure your Little/child has their school supplies ready. School's around the corner!

Want some more summer options? Check out “Profile of a Successful College Ready Student” for more options.

NOTES

Profile of a Successful College Ready 8th Grade Student

College and Career Readiness Standards

Test Scores

Achieve Level 3 or 4 on the English Language Arts and Math State Exams

Academic Expectations

Depending on your Little’s school’s grading scale, he/she is meeting college ready standards if he/she scores...

- On an Alpha Scale :A or B
- On a Numeric scale: 80+
- On an E-N scale: E or G
- On an ME-MB: ME or MA

It is recommended that your Little:

- Takes Honors Courses
- Participates in at least 1 extra-curricular activity: School Club, Sports Team, or Student Government

For more details visit: <http://schools.nyc.gov>

Extra Testing

If your Little’s school offers it...

- Regents Exams: Algebra, Geometry, Living Environment, Earth Science, and etc. (can count towards high school credit)

Important Notes

SHSAT Exam: needed for entrance to Specialized High Schools.

High School Applications: needed for entrance to public high schools. Visit www.schools.nyc.gov for the necessary application steps or see our attached one pager featuring some high school admissions pointers.

- 4: Excel in standards
- 3: Proficient in standards
- 2: Partially proficient in standards
- 1: Well below proficient in standards

A: 95+	E: Excellent	ME: Exceed Standards
B: 85+	G: Good	MA: Above Standards
C: 75+	S: Satisfactory	MT: Meets Standards
D: 65+	N: Needs improvement	MP: Approaching Standards
F: 55+	U: Unsatisfactory	MB: Below Standards

For Boarding School: A Better Chance is the oldest and only national organization of its kind changing the life trajectory for academically talented youth of color via access to rigorous and prestigious education. Their mission is to increase substantially the number of well-educated young people of color who are capable of assuming positions of responsibility and leadership in American society. Applications open in February and are due in May and results are released in late May.

For more info on Boarding School, visit: www.abetterchance.org

Eighth Grade ELA Common Core Standards

Literature

Key Ideas and Details:

1. Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision

Craft and Structure:

1. Analyze full-length novels, short stories, poems, and other genres by authors who represent diverse world cultures

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

1. Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors

Responding to Literature:

1. Interpret, analyze, and evaluate literature by making connections to: other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, personal events, and situations
 - a. Self-select text to develop personal preferences
 - b. Establish and use criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces

Writing

Text Types and Purposes:

1. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence

Production and Distribution of Writing:

1. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

1. Conduct short research projects to answer a question drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration

Responding to Literature:

1. Make well-supported personal, cultural, textual, and thematic connections across genres

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration:

1. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented
2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats and evaluate the motives behind its presentation

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

1. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest
2. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate

Language

Conventions of Standard English:

1. Explain the function of verbal's (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences
2. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice
3. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood
4. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood

Knowledge of Language:

1. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

1. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase
2. Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context
3. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words



Is Your Little on Track? 8th Grade

Big Tip:

Join your Little and their parent at a parent teacher conference. Take the opportunity to learn a lot more about your Little's academic standing. Observe and listen to what teachers have to say. Ask resource-based questions. i.e What activities can the Little attend to support with that learning need?

September	• First Day of School
October	• Visit High School Open Houses • Launch of BBBS of NYC Bigs Education Webinars • Launch of BBBS of NYC One-on-One Tutoring Program • High School Admissions Workshop • BBBS of NYC Parent and Bigs Education Orientation • Launch of BBBS of NYC Academic Missions and Journeys for Matches • Launch of BBBS of NYC Show Us Your Academic Swag Questions Campaign
November	• Parent Teacher Conferences • Attend High School Fairs and Open Houses • BBBS of NYC Middle School College Trip
December	• High School Applications due Round 1
January	• NY State Regents (if offered) • BBBS of NYC Think College Now Program
February	• HS Admissions Round 1 Results • Boarding School Applications Begin • BBBS of NYC Middle School College Trip
March	• Apply for HS Admissions Round 2 • BBBS of NYC Middle School College Trip
April	• Cornerstone Summer Program Enrollment • NY English Language Arts and Math State Exams • BBBS of NYC Academic Recognition Applications Due
May	• HS Admissions Round 2 results • HS Admissions Appeal • Last Day for Boarding School Applications
June	• Middle School Appeal Results Distributed • Last Day of School • NY State Regents • BBBS of NYC Academic Recognition Ceremony • Summer Slide Launch at BBBS of NYC
July	• Summer School Begins NYC Summer Quest begins • Beacon Youth Program • Cornerstone Program
August	• Summer School Ends • NYC Summer Quest Ends • Beacon Youth Program • Cornerstone Program

It's the first day of your last year before High School, make it count! Try new clubs, challenge yourself, leave with a bang!

When choosing your classes for High School make sure you try new electives. Also, see “Profiles for a College Ready Successful Student” to choose your classes.

Did you know?

Over the summer, students lose over 2/3's of what they learned over the year. That's why summer programs are valuable. Go for Honors!

Big Tip: If your child/Little is interested in a Performing Arts School, encourage them to start exploring arts programming and building a portfolio in the 7th grade.

Want some more summer options? Check out “Profile of a Successful College Ready Student” for more options.

NOTES

Help your Little avoid falling behind during the summer months:

- **SHSAT Test Prep:** PrepMate, Princeton, Kaplan
The SHSAT is the Specialized High School Admissions Test taken in November offered to 8th and 9th grade who wish to attend one of the nine Specialized Schools. For more info see: www.schools.nyc.gov
- **College STEP:** The Science and Technology Entry Program Academy is a pre-college program for middle and high school students who are interested in pursuing careers in science and health related professions. The program invites qualified students to participate in workshops and college courses in math and science as well as SAT and college preparatory workshops. Visit one of the City University of New York (CUNY) schools for more information.
- www.MommyPoppins.com has a great list of summer camps and programs that are free in New York City.
- Encourage your Little to join the Summer Reading Challenge. Information can be found at www.scholastic.com/summer.
- Keep a journal with pictures of your summer activities.
- Spend the summer with NYC Parks and learn to swim, work out, create arts and play sports with other kids, all for free! For more information, visit: www.nycgovparks.org and click “Programs.”
- **Cornerstone Program:** Cornerstone Programs provide engaging, high-quality, year-round programs for adults and young people. Programs are located at 94 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Community Centers throughout the five boroughs. Cornerstone youth programs are designed to help participants acquire the skills and attitudes they need to graduate from high school, succeed in their chosen career, and give back to the community. For more information visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/home/home.shtml>.
- **Beacon Youth Program:** Beacon programs are school-based community centers serving children age 6 and older and adults. There are currently 80 Beacons located throughout the five boroughs of New York City, operating in the afternoons and evenings, on weekends, during school holidays and vacation periods, including the summer. Beacon youth programs are designed to help participants acquire the skills and attitudes they need to graduate from high school, succeed in their chosen career, and give back to the community.
- **NYC Summer Quest:** Summer Quest is a free, five-week, full-day summer learning program that provides elementary and middle school students with fun, hands-on enrichment experiences while strengthening their academic skills. DOE teachers collaborate with educators from community-based organizations to offer students Common-Core aligned instruction, enrichment activities, sports and recreation, and field trips. Summer Quest is located at particular schools. To learn if your Little’s/child’s school offers it, inquire with the Parent Coordinator/Family Engagement Coordinator





**Big Brothers Big Sisters
of New York City**

THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES®

40 Rector St., 11th floor New York, NY 10006 • Tel: 212-686-2042 • Fax: 212-779-1221
bigsny.org • facebook.com/bbbsnyc • twitter.com/bbbsnyc • instagram.com/bbbsnyc

Printing Courtesy of RR Donnelley