

Reading Toolkit: Grade 8 Objective 3.A.7.a

Standard 3.0 Comprehension of Literary Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Literary Text

Indicator 7. Analyze and evaluate the author's purposeful use of language

Objective a. Analyze and evaluate how specific language choices contribute to meaning

Assessment Limits:

Significant words (e.g., idioms, colloquialisms, etc.) with a specific effect on meaning

Denotations of above-grade-level words used in context

Connotations of grade-appropriate words and phrases in context

Selected Response (SR) Item

Question

Read this passage from '[Dear Mr. President Thomas Jefferson Letters from a Philadelphia Bookworm](#)', a novel that takes place when President Jefferson was in office. Amelia Hornsby has grown up in Philadelphia but has recently followed her father, a doctor, to Pittsburgh. Then answer the following.

Read this sentence from paragraph 2 of the letter.

Yet, if they do come to Pittsburgh, we shall not fail to celebrate these titans of exploration.

The word in paragraph 2 that *most* helps a reader understand the meaning of *titans* is

- A. entourage
- B. progress
- C. heroes
- D. banquets

Correct Answer

C. heroes

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Handouts

*from Dear Mr. President**Thomas Jefferson Letters from a Philadelphia Bookworm*

By Jennifer Armstrong

Introduction

At the beginning of the 1800's, American was still a brand-new country. Its citizens were still learning who they were and where they might go in their new surroundings. To lead them, they had one of the most talented and brilliant presidents this country has ever seen: Thomas Jefferson. He was not only a statesman and politician. He was not only the man who drafted our revolutionary Declaration of Independence. He was also a musician, a scientist, an inventor, an engineer, an architect, a gardener, a family man, a friend, and a philosopher. Perhaps no other president in American history has come close to his incredible range of interests, skills, and talents.

In addition to being the third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson was the president of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. Philadelphia was the largest, most intellectual, and most sophisticated city in America at that time. The American Philosophical Society included some of the country's most respected scientists and thinkers.

Imagine, then, a girl named Amelia Hornsby living during the early 1800s in Philadelphia. In this city, she would have rubbed elbows with some of the brightest lights in the country. She would have received a good education in Philadelphia, which had very progressive ideas about schooling. And she would have taken an active and lively interest in the current events and political affairs of her day, even writing to the president if she felt it was her duty. Imagine Amelia writing to President Jefferson.

November 30, 1806

Pittsburgh
To Mr. Thomas Jefferson, President
Washington City

Dear Sir,

We have by now read many of the reports ourselves, as they have been published in the Gazette. Of much interest here at Pittsburgh was the news, brought to us by a member of this college, of having attended the public auction in Saint Louis where Captains Lewis and Clark¹ sold off so many of the items employed on their tour. This colleague of my father's, one Landau Herrick, bought for himself the rifle carried by Pvt. Cruzatte; and as we understand, it was this rifle by which Capt. Lewis was accidentally shot and wounded. It is a souvenir of considerable value to Mr. Herrick and of interest to us all.

²We will be very eager to know if Capts. Lewis and Clark and their entourage will be stopping at Pittsburgh. The news informs us that they make very slow progress indeed, as they are stopped at every town and settlement and hailed as returning heroes. I imagine they will be heartily sick of balls and banquets before they take another step. Yet, if they do come to Pittsburgh, we shall not fail to celebrate these titans of exploration.

How sorry I was to learn that Sacagawea² must stay with her husband, Charbonneau, with the Mandan.³ What puzzles me is the report that Charbonneau was paid in excess of \$500 for his services to the Corps of Discovery; but nowhere have I found a report of any payment rendered to Sacagawea. I should be most interested to hear at what value her services were placed. For inasmuch as she did most swiftly and expertly guide the company across the Rocky Mountains and to the Columbia River, thence to the sea, her services would seem invaluable.

⁴And inasmuch as I must consider some employment for myself beyond being my father's hostess (for he is to marry a widow lady of this town), I should like to know how highly a woman might be compensated for hard work. I do not propose that I should be a wilderness guide. But it has been suggested to me that a person of my education and attainments might do well as a teacher for young ladies; and as this suits my temper very well, I think I may try it when I am of suitable years.

Respectfully yours,

Amelia Hornsby

Amelia Hornsby, Educator

P.S. I hope that the Negro slave York was not also denied his fair portion of reward?

A.H.

¹ American frontiersmen who explored the American Northwest

² A Shoshoni guide and interpreter for the Lewis and Clark expedition

³ A Native American tribe who lived in present day North and South Dakota