

Standard 1

Students will become independent and literarily astute readers of the biblical text in Hebrew.

PREAMBLE

Reading and understanding the *TaNakh* in its original Hebrew allows its reader to experience the religious power of the text, its poetic beauty and its literary nuances. As the great Hebrew poet, Hayim Nachman Bialik, said, “Reading a text in translation is like kissing a bride with the veil still on.”

The goal of this standard is to help students develop strategies for reading the text in Hebrew. This standard lays out many of the linguistic and grammatical areas that students should master, and it delineates access skills that students will need to read the text closely. It teaches students how to do more than just read: it teaches students how to read closely, and with sensitivity to the text’s subtleties – in short, how to be a literarily astute reader. Acquiring these strategies and access skills will help students become independent and sensitive readers of the biblical text; that is, Jews who are able to pick up a *TaNakh* and read, understand and interpret on their own.

The ultimate goal of comprehending the text is to allow for creation of meaning. Comprehension is a means to an end, and the end is a relationship with the *TaNakh* that needs no intermediaries, no go-betweens, just the Jewish reader, the Hebrew book and no veil.

STANDARD 1
GRADE LEVEL K-1 BENCHMARKS

- 1.1 Retells learned biblical narratives**
- 1.2 Participates in conversations in response to the biblical narrative.**
→ *Benchmark Genius: 2.3*
- 1.3 Knows that the *TaNaKH* is a Hebrew text.**
- 1.4 Recognizes names, places and key words from biblical texts**
Sample Learning Activity:
- Students respond to teacher-read verses from the *TaNaKH* using key phrases in Hebrew. (For example, יעקב, רחל, לאה, משה, מרים, אברהם, שרה, סיני, כנען)

GRADE LEVEL 2 BENCHMARKS

- 1.5 Locates names, places and key words from biblical texts.**
→ *Benchmark Genius: 5.5*
Sample Learning Activities:
- Given a short selection of a biblical narrative, find and highlight names of personalities referred to in the text in one color and names of places in another.
 - Find key words and phrases in the biblical text when prompted by the question “איך כתוב בלשון התורה?”
- 1.6 Reads verses from the *TaNaKH* in Hebrew**
- 1.7 Identifies the alpha-numeric of Hebrew**
Sample Learning Activities:
- Find the correct page when prompted with Hebrew *perek* and *pasuk*.
 - Locate *pesukim* in chapters being studied.
- 1.8 Articulates names and order of the five books of Moses in Hebrew.**
→ *Benchmarks Genius: 4.7*
- 1.9 Differentiates between section, book, chapter and verse of *TaNaKH*.**

STANDARD 1
GRADE LEVEL 3-5 BENCHMARKS

1.10 Employs a variety of strategies and access skills when reading blocks of texts independently.

1.10a Understands verb prefixes and suffixes.

Suggested Examples:

- ויאמר, ויאמרו, ותאמר

1.10b Identifies roots in verbs and nouns.

→ *Benchmark Genius: 4.18*

1.10c Recognizes repeating words and roots.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Locate words in a given passage that share a common root.
- Given a short passage, identify a recurring root in its various forms.

1.10d Identifies biblical noun declensions, e.g., possessive suffixes.

Suggested Examples:

- ביתי, ביתך, ביתכם

1.10e Identifies names, characters, places and events in the text.

1.10f Distinguishes between narrative, dialogue and inner quotations.

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 3:13: ויאמר משה אל הא-לוהים הנה אנכי בא אל בני ישראל ואמרת להם א-לוהי אבותיכם שלחני אליכם ואמרו לי מה שמו מה אמר אליהם
- Ruth 1:20: ותאמר אליהן אל תקראנה לי נעמי קראן לי מרא כי המר שדי לי מאד

Suggested learning Activities:

- Given an unpunctuated text, put in quotation marks and punctuation.
- In an oral “group” reading of the narrative, read the dialogue or narration portion correctly and identify where the role begins and ends, e.g., read the role of Moshe, the word of God, the Israelites, and the narrative voice.

1.10g Uses context clues to comprehend words in their context.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Read an “unseen” passage and translate a new word from its context.

1.10h Comprehends verses and short blocks of verses from the TaNaKH in Hebrew.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Respond to comprehension questions about the plot line and sequence of a story.
- Given divided sections of a Torah portion, write captions.

1.10i Divides longer passages into scenes.

1.10j Articulates the plot and/or sequence of events in longer passages.

1.11 Knows basic biblical vocabulary.

1.12 Parses verses using specific trope.

Suggested examples:

- **אתנחתא** – divides biblical verse into two sections.
- **סוף פסוק , סלוק** – ends biblical verse.

1.13 Discerns different names or nomenclatures referring to a biblical personage or the lack of a name of a biblical personage.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 37, Joseph and his brothers.
- Exodus 2:1-7, Bat Pharaoh and the women by the Nile.

1.14 Identifies *perek* and *pasuk* of texts in standard Hebrew *TaNakhim*.

1.15 Cites text, including *perek* and *pasuk*, to prove a point, opinion or claim.

STANDARD 1
GRADE LEVEL 6-8 BENCHMARKS

1.16 Employs additional access skills when reading blocks of texts independently.

1.16a Recognizes regular biblical verse syntax.

Suggested Examples:

- Verb, subject and direct object.
- ... ויקם מלך חדש... – Exodus 1:8
- ותקח צפורה צור – Exodus 4.25

1.16b Identifies perfect and imperfect forms of verbs in their textual context.

Suggested Examples:

- Perfect שמר, שמרה
- Imperfect ישמור, תשמור

1.16c Understands gender, person, aspect and number.

Suggested Examples:

- Masculine and feminine; first, second and third person; perfect and imperfect; singular and plural.

1.16d Recognizes vav consecutive imperfect.

Suggested Example:

- Exodus: 2:2

Suggested Resource:

- Marc Zvi Brettler, Biblical Hebrew for Students of Modern Israeli Hebrew, p. 170.

1.16e Recognizes the *kal/pa'al*, *pi'el*, and *niphal binyanim* and knows the form of verb signals.

1.16f Identifies shared roots in verbs and nouns.

Suggested Example:

- Exodus 3:2, ר.א.ה

1.16g Understands related words in a noun construct.

Suggested Examples:

- מקום שכם, תורת משה, ידי עשו, בת פרעה

1.16h Parses verb with accusative suffix.

Suggested Examples:

- ויקחהו, ואשלחך, יאכלנו

1.17 Identifies literary devices in texts.

➔ *Benchmark Genius 2.6*

Suggested Examples:

- Typological numbers (i.e. 1, 7, 40); inclusion (symmetrical verses in the opening and closing of a section); parallelism; roots that repeat; type-scene.

1.18 Recognizes unusual verse structure

Suggested Examples:

- When a verse begins with a noun: **ויוסף הוא השליט על הארץ** Genesis 42:6
- **וה' פקד את שרה** Genesis 21:1
- When there is no verb in the verse: **ה' הוא האלהים** I Kings 18:39

1.19 Recognizes gaps in the text.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.15*

Suggested Example:

- **ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו** Genesis 4:8

1.20 Comprehends vocabulary without prior exposure in its context.

1.21 Uses a concordance when exploring the significance of a particular word or phrase.

Suggested Examples:

- Even Shoshan Concordance; Judaica Classics Library; Bar Ilan Responsa (CD-ROMs)

1.22 Employs grammatical and literary skills when reading blocks of text independently.

1.23 Reads and comprehends longer blocks of verses from the *TaNaKH* in Hebrew.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Respond to comprehension questions about the story line, sequence or laws of a given biblical passage.
- Find and cite verses to support a personal statement about the text.
- Raise questions regarding an unusual syntactical, structural or grammatical structure.
- Compare passages of two texts or within the same narrative for their similarities and note differences in language or sequence.
- Know how to divide a block of verses into natural divisions or, given natural divisions of an “unseen” narrative, give each section a caption.
- Use literary devices to support a search for meaning in the text.

1.24 Comprehends units of text after textual study.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Refer to previously learned sources in new text study.

1.25 Understands that the verbal system in biblical Hebrew is different from modern Hebrew.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Translate biblical Hebrew into modern; translate modern newspaper Hebrew article into biblical prose.

STANDARD 1
GRADE LEVEL 9-12 BENCHMARKS

1.26 Knows aspects of biblical Hebrew.

Suggested Resource:

- Marc Zvi Brettler, Biblical Hebrew for Students of Modern Hebrew

Suggested Examples:

- Explanations cited from biblical Hebrew for Students of Modern Hebrew.
- Perfect verb, e.g. **פָּקַד / פָּקְדָה** (typified by suffixes added to verbal roots), p. 170
- Imperfect verb, e.g. **יִשְׁלַח / יִשְׁלַח** (generally a prefixed verb), p. 170
- Vav consecutive imperfect e.g. **וַיָּבֹאוּ / וַתְּבֹאנָה** (Context will indicate complete or future action). pp 172-174
- Vav consecutive perfect, e.g. **וַאֲהַבְתָּ** (Context will indicate completed or future action.) pp. 172-174.
- Cohortative, e.g. **נִבְנֶה**
נִבְנֶה הַבֵּה נִבְנֶה /Let us build (Expresses desire in first person singular and plural), p. 171
- Jussive, e.g. **יְהִי**
יְהִי אוֹר /Let there be light (Conveys notion of “let” or “may” in third person form), p. 171
- Imperative, e.g. **דַּבֵּר / דַּבְּרִי** (Conveys command)
- Infinitive construct, e.g. **שָׁמוֹר** (Functions like a modern infinitive without the “ל” and can take on a prefix and suffix), p. 175
- Infinite absolute, e.g. **שָׁמַע**
וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַע תִּשְׁמָעוּן (Strengthens a verb), p. 175

1.27 Parses verbs completely.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Given a verb, the student identifies its root, banyan, gender, number, person and aspect.

1.28 Uses biblical dictionaries independently

Suggested Example:

- Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.

1.29 Uses computer *TaNaKH* programs and accordances.

Suggested Examples:

- Judaica Classics; Responsa; Bible Works

1.30 Analyzes literary devices found in the biblical text.

Suggested Examples:

- A significant number; leitworts; parallelisms and inclusios; repetition.

1.31 Recognizes literary conventions of the biblical text.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.25*

Suggested Examples:

- Foreshadowing; story reversals; type scenes; repetitions; dialogues.

Suggested Resources:

- Joel Grishaver, *Being Torah*; Robert Alter, *The art of Biblical Narrative*; Ilana Pardes, *Counter Traditions in the Bible*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Write an analysis of a text highlighting literary devices in the text.
- Use literary conventions and devices to analyze biblical personalities.

1.32 Translates verses meaningfully so they accurately reflect the Hebrew.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Given an “unseen” text, translate the text.

1.33 Makes conceptual and linguistic connections within and between texts.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Given two texts or sections from a narrative, compare them and reflect on their significance and meaning.

1.34 Identifies various genres of biblical literature.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.4, 4.35*

Suggested Examples:

- Poetry; legal texts; narrative, myth; historical narrative; wisdom; prophesy.

1.35 Understands uses of metaphoric language in the TaNaKH.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Suggest interpretations for metaphors in prophetic language.
- Deliver a dvar torah to the class analyzing structure, style and use of metaphor for a given text.

1.36 Reads and comprehends selected poetic/prophetic texts.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Create artwork, a musical for work or a collage in response to text.

1.37 Presents an interpretation of the text and uses literary understanding to critically evaluate other readings of the same biblical passage.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.31*

Sample Learning Activity:

- Debate other students, comparing interpretations of a chosen text.

1.38 Engages in intertextual and intratextual exegesis.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.31*

Sample Learning Activity:

- Compare and analyze text for their commonalities, differences and meanings.

Standard 2

Students will be engaged in the learning of ancient, rabbinic and modern modes of interpretation of the biblical text and will see themselves as a link in this ongoing chain of interpretation.

PREAMBLE

As a multivalent and often ambiguous text, the *TaNaKH* invites us questioning and interpretation. This standard encourages students to question and identify aspects of the text that “beg” to be understood and interpreted. By way of studying traditional and contemporary commentators’ interpretations as well as modern and ancient modes of interpretations, students will develop the ability to apply interpretative methodologies to the study of *TaNaKH*. The standard invites students to explore the multiple interpretations of the text and ultimately offer and find textual support for their personal understanding of the biblical text.

STANDARD 2
GRADE LEVEL K-2 BENCHMARKS

2.1 Gives examples of rabbis, teachers and other people who help explain the Torah.

Suggested Example:

- There are people who interpreted the Torah a long time ago and people who still interpret the Torah today.

Sample Learning Activities

- List examples of people who help us understand the Torah.
- Talk to guests invited to class to discuss the weekly Parashah; Rabbi, Cantor, Camp Director, parents.
- Discuss a Torah story with parents and bring feedback to class, demonstrating how parents help us to understand the Torah.

2.2 Contributes personal ideas about the narrative.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.5*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Express responses to, ideas about, and reactions to the Torah's story.
- Provide a personal interpretation
- Discuss ideas about the Torah in circle time.
- Keep a portfolio with pictures and other forms of expression displaying progression of ideas.

2.3 Raises questions about the stories of the Torah.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.2*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify what may not be immediately understood in the narrative, e.g., "Who created **תהו ובהו**?"
- Articulate questions or comments, e.g., "Why did this happen?", "How did this happen?", "Isn't this like/unlike...?", "I think it might have happened because..."

2.4 Knows there are special stories – midrashim – that help explain and teach lessons based on the Torah's words and narratives.

Suggested Resources:

- Marc Gellman, *Does God Have a Big Toe? Stories About Stories in the Bible*. Sandy Sasso, *Noah's Wife*; Gabrielle Kaplan, *The Magic Tanach*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Dramatize midrashim.
- Create own midrash based on a selection of Torah.

STANDARD 2
GRADE LEVEL 3-5 BENCHMARKS

2.5 Demonstrates the understanding that some questions have more than one answer.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 8.6, 8.10*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Give an example of a question from a class lesson that has more than one answer.
- Offer alternative solutions to solve a problem offered by the teacher.
- Present questions in a round-robin format to elicit answers from classmates.

2.6 Recognizes special literary characteristics of the biblical text.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.16*

Suggested Examples:

- A shift from singular to plural, repetitions, something that seems to be missing, a repeating sound, an inconsistency of an action or use of a word.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify a special characteristic of the text.
- Generate questions based on a special characteristic of the text.
- Present a personal interpretation of the textual issue.

2.7 Articulates that there are commentaries that provide interpretations of the Torah.

Suggested Examples:

- Midrash aggadah and midrash halakhah; Rashi, Rashbam.

Suggested Resources

- Carol K. Ingall, *Rashi and His World*; The Melton Graded Curriculum; Harvey Fields, *Torah Commentary for Our Times*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain how a specific commentary interprets a given text.
- Compare two commentaries on the same text.
- Explain personal choice of commentary for a given text.

2.8 Explains how midrashim help interpret the biblical text.

Suggested Resource:

- Barry Holtz, "Midrash" in *Back to the Sources*, pp. 177-211; Hayyim Nahman Bialik and Y. H. Ravnitzky, "Book of Legends/Sefer Ha-Aggadah: Legends from the Talmud and Midrash"; Marc Gellman, *God's Mailbox*; Ellen Frankel, *Five Books of Miriam*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Suggest a connection between the midrash and the biblical text.
- Find a textual connection between the midrash and the biblical text.
- Give possible reasons why a midrash was written.
- Create illustrated midrash or aggadah based on biblical verse(s).
- Dramatize two midrashim for the same text.

2.9 Distinguishes between midrash and Torah text.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 5.7*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Given two or three midrashim and Torah verses on which midrashim are based, identify and cite Torah verses and delineate others as midrashim.
- Create a personal midrash on select verses, either written, illustrated or dramatized.

2.10 Navigates and reads a Rashi commentary from a humash.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify and locate a *dibur hamatchil*.
- Identify other biblical verses cited in studied commentary.
- Explain why Rashi's commentaries, as well as several other commentaries, were written in special script.
- Decode Rashi script.

STANDARD 2
GRADE LEVEL 6-8 BENCHMARKS

2.11 Articulates elements and principles of Rashi's commentary on the Torah text.

Suggested Examples:

- Rashi's use of the terms *pshuto shel mikra* and *midrash*, clarifications of words, contradictions, explanations of grammar and textual difficulties.

Suggested Resources:

- Avigdor Boncheck, *What's Bothering Rashi*; Naomi Pasochoff, *Links in the Chain*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Find implied question "מה קשה לרש"י" raised by Rashi's comment.
- Explain how Rashi's comment explicates the text.
- Read a biblical text with Rashi's commentary.
- Suggest a personal resolution to Rashi's "question".

2.12 Applies some basic principles of Midrash.

Suggested Examples:

- Midrash began as far back as biblical times. As a genre, it came to the fore in the early rabbinic era. It is an ongoing process and people continue to write midrash today. Midrash attempts to explain a question and/or to teach a lesson Midrash delves into the text to add meaning. If it is midrash *halakha*, then its goal is to explain a particular law. If it is midrash *aggadah*, its goal is to teach a moral principle or to try to resolve a textual question, *koshi*, which arises from the words, style or literary characteristics of the text.

Suggested Resources:

- Samuel Peerless, *The Methodology of Nechama Leibowitz*; Barry Holtz, "Midrash" from *Back to the Sources*.

Suggested Learning Activities:

- Identify the purpose and message of the different types of midrash.
- Given two or three midrashim on the same text, explain what aspect of the text is being interpreted in each midrash.

2.13 Interprets various art media as modern forms of textual midrash.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.23, 8.28*

Suggested Resources:

- Visual arts; music, drama, i.e. Storahelling; Jewish theater revived; Jo Milgrom, *Handmade Midrash*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze works of art as a form of textual midrash.
- Illustrate, tear paper, use photography, use micrography, dance and/or sing to create a personal midrash.

2.14 Differentiates between *peshat* and *derash*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Offer a contextual interpretation of a given set of verses.
- Explain differences in Rashi's commentaries between the *peshat* and *derash* explanations.

2.15 Explains the basic principles of *Parshanut Hamikra*, rabbinic approaches to textual issues and *k'shaim* in the TaNaKH.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1:18*

Suggested Examples:

- To the early rabbis, the writers of the Midrash, Mishnah and Talmud, and the medieval commentators who followed the midrashic approach to commentary, the text of the Torah is perfect, written by God and therefore must make sense, Ergo:
- The text cannot have *contradictions*, e.g. two descriptions of creation.
- The text cannot have unnecessary *repetitions*, e.g. narrative of Abraham's servant looking for a wife and finding Rebecca, where details of events are repeated in the retelling several times.
- The text cannot be *missing details*, e.g. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4), Ruth 1 (ten years later).
- The text cannot have *grammatical* or *syntactical* mistakes.

Suggested Resources:

- Joel Rosenberg, "The Biblical Narrative" and Edward L. Greenstein, "Medieval Bible Commentaries" in *Back to the Sources*, Barry Holtz, editor; Joel Lurie Grishaver, *Teaching Torah*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Suggest a type of *koshi*/קושי a given text possesses, e.g. grammatical, syntactical, unnecessary repetition, missing detail, apparent contradiction, ambiguity.
- Demonstrate an understanding that one *koshi*/קושי can have a variety of responses.

2.16 Compares multiple interpretations to a textual issue.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.2, 3.6*

Suggested Resources:

- Mikra'ot Gedolot; Torat Hayyim; Mikraot Gedolot Haketer; Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in the Book of Genesis*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare two commentaries on the same *koshi* and note differences.
- Cite multiple interpretations in one commentary, e.g. Rashi's *dvar acher*.
- Write own commentary or resolution to an issue, including more than one possible explanation.
- Contribute a personal commentary to class: a "Torat Hayyim" or "Mikra'ot Gidolot" page.

2.17 Explains interpretive differences between commentators through the different sociological times, places and contexts in which they lived.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 8.25*

Suggested Examples:

- Onkelos, Rashi, Rashbam, Ramban, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Everett Fox, Ellen Frankel.

Suggested Resource:

- Encyclopedia Judaica.

Sample Learning Activities:

- List three facts about the commentator's life and how it may have influenced the commentator's approach to the commentary.
- Portray a commentator in dialogue with other commentators about a given text.
- Interview a commentator.

2.18 Interprets a text to relate it to a personal experience.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.20, 8.7, 8.9*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Respond with personal examples on which text sheds light.
- Write journal responses, e.g. "Have you ever had an experience like the one in the text?", "How does this law illuminate an aspect of your life or the lives of other people you know?", "How does it relate to your moral compass?"

2.19 Evaluates own process of interpretation.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Write a commentary to a section or verse of text and note the methods used in personal commentary.
- Keep a log of different forms of interpretations.

STANDARD 2
GRADE LEVEL 9-12 BENCHMARKS

2.20 Translates and interprets a Rashi commentary independently.

Suggested Resources:

- Chaim Pearl, *Rashi*; Edward Greenstein, "Sensitivity to Language in Rashi's Commentary on the Torah", The Solomon Goldman Lectures, Volume VI, 1993.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Read and interpret an unfamiliar Rashi commentary.
- Locate the source of a given Rashi commentary in its original context, e.g. , Talmud, Midrash, Rabbah, Tanhuma, etc.
- Examine the context of texts from which Rashi cites.

2.21 Identifies and compares various methodologies of rabbinic interpretation/ *Parshanut Hamikra*.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.11*

Suggested Examples:

- Midrash aggadah, midrash halakhah; Rashi's revolutionary, *P'shuto shel miqra* and *Aggadah m'yashevet*; Rashbam's *P'shat* approach; Bekhor Shor's rational approach; Ibn Ezra's linguistic and philosophical approach; Ramban's mystical and allegorical approach.

Suggested Resources:

- Edward L. Greenstein, "Medieval Bible Commentaries" in *Back to the Sources*, Barry Holtz, editor.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Categorize rabbinic interpretations into *midrash aggadah* and *midrash halakhah*.
- Identify the approach of the commentary studied and what is being interpreted in the text.

2.22. Understands the application of hermeneutic principles of rabbinic interpretation used in midrash.

Suggested Examples:

- The deduction from a minor case to a major case (קל וחומר).
- An analogy between texts based on a common word (גזרה שוה).
- An application of a principle from one verse (בנין אב מכתוב אחד).
- An application of a principle from two verses (בנין אב משני כתובים).
- An interpretation of a general principle derived from a particular principle (כלל ופרט).
- An interpretation of a particular principle derived from a general principle (פרט וכלל).
- Deriving a principle from a similar passage (כיוצא בו במקום אחר).

- An interpretation from its context (דבר מלמד מעניינו).

Suggested Resources:

- Yaakov Elman, "Classic Rabbinic Interpretation" in *The Jewish Study Bible*, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi, editors.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain how principle is used in midrash and to provide interpretation.
- Given two or three verses with the same commentary, rewrite the verses using principles but not terminology.
- Make a poster of rabbinic hermeneutic principles.

2.23 Applies understanding of methodologies to newly introduced rabbinic commentaries.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain how a specific commentary is representative of the commentator's methodology.
- Given a previously unseen rabbinic commentary, translate, identify the textual prompt (*koshi*), and explain the commentator's solution or explanation.

2.24 Utilizes Mikraot Gedolot (Haketer edition recommended) or Torat Hayyim text as a tool for interpretation.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify a textual issue or philosophical issue and cite two or three different commentaries on the issue.
- Highlight the main point(s) of each commentary and the interpretation of a given issue.
- Evaluate commentaries; propose the "best" commentary.

2.25 Identifies the literary characteristics used in TaNaKH and uses them to construct an independent interpretation of the text.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.30*

Suggested Examples:

- Word play, understatement/overstatement, inclusion, chiasm, parallelism, repetitions, leitwort, ambiguity, type scene.

Suggested Resources:

- Joel Rosenberg, "Bible: Bible Narrative" in *Back to the Sources*; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Choose a narrative and write a personal interpretation based on literary analysis.

- Participate in a class dialogue on a given narrative, presenting one's own literary analysis of narrative.

2.26 Demonstrates the text's multivocal nature regarding a given theme.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.6, 6.28*

Suggested Examples:

- Shabbat, images of God, covenant, slavery, reward and punishment.
- Present "findings" and analysis of a theme in a class symposium.

2.27 Applies inner-biblical interpretation to selected texts.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.37*

Suggested Examples:

- Deuteronomy on Exodus; Psalms and Genesis; Ezra-Nehemia on Deuteronomy; Judges on Genesis.

Suggested Resource:

- Yair Zakovitch, מבוא לפרשנות פנים-מקראית

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare the political/social/religious arguments of different texts.
- Analyze text based on the assumption that inner-biblical interpretation is occurring.

2.28 Interprets biblical texts with the help of ancient extra-biblical sources.

Suggested Examples:

- Targumim on the Akeda, Dead Sea Scroll on Isaiah.

Suggested Resource:

- James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East Volume I, An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain how the extra-biblical source helps to illuminate the biblical text.
- Evaluate the extent to which the extra-biblical source helps interpret the biblical text.

2.29 Assesses the implications of different modern approaches to the reading of biblical text.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.17*

Suggested Examples:

- Source criticism, feminist readings, literary criticism, reader response.

Suggested Resources:

- Etz Hayim Torah and Commentary, JPS; The Torah, A Modern Commentary, UAHC; Alice Bach, *Women in the Hebrew Bible*; Adele Berlin and Marc Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible: TaNaKH Translation, Torah, Ne'viim and Kethuvim*; Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*; Tikva Frymer, Kensky, *Reading Women in the Bible*; Benjamin Scolnic, "Modern Methods of Bible Study" in Etz Hayim Torah and Commentary; Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial*; Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on the Book of Genesis and the Particulars of Rapture: Reflections on Exodus*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Categorize questions regarding a text.
- Use different approaches in interpreting biblical text.
- Evaluate approaches to the interpretation of selected secondary sources.
- Write a translation as a deliberate interpretation.

2.30 Evaluates various art media as biblical interpretation.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.23, 8.28*

Suggested Resources:

- Dance and Movement – Liz Lerman, Joanne Tucker, Avodah Dance Troupe; Drama – The Cameri Theater of Tel Aviv, Habima Theater, "*V'ayomer, va'yelech*", Storahtelling; Visual Arts – Debbie Ugoretz, papercuts and paper ripping, Ellen Frankel, *Illustrated Hebrew Bible*; works in micography; Music – Brian Gelfand.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare several artistic interpretations of a text.
- Design and present an artistic interpretation of a text.

2.31 Develops own interpretations of text.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.36, 4.24, 6.27*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Translate accurately and present a discussion of a given text from the *TaNaKH* that includes classic commentaries and modern scholars on the text.
- Write a commentary and note hermeneutic principles used in the commentary.
- Apply a personal lens to the interpretation of the text.

2.32 Applies interpretive skills to the reading of literature.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Can be integrated with a Hebrew literature or an English Class.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Interdisciplinary unit with English class: analyze poetry or a selected novel with a conscious effort to supply skills and/or compare themes acquired through *TaNakh* study.
- Interdisciplinary unit with a Hebrew literature class: identify biblical themes and biblical echoes in modern Israeli music, poetry and literature.

Standard 3

Students will appreciate *TaNaKH* as a multivocal text with a complex history of development.

PREAMBLE

For modern Jews, the understanding that the *TaNaKH* is not monolithic and has a complex history cannot be ignored. Whatever one's relationship is to the critical study of *TaNaKH*, one must, at the very least, engage with the existence of these approaches. The methodology of this standard is to root this engagement in the earliest experiences of children so that when presented in later years with the critical approach in more detail, they are able to integrate it into their understanding of *Limmud Torah*.

This standard raises complex and spiritually challenging issues such as, "If we teach students to view the *TaNaKH* critically, will they want to live their lives by it?" "If students don't believe that the torah is written by God, why should they value it more than Shakespeare, Homer or any other kind of literature?"

The challenges posed by such questions are real and should not be under-estimated. Nevertheless, we believe that critical approaches to the study of *TaNaKH* can and must be taught in ways that provide spiritual nourishment and compelling connections to Judaism for children.

This standard gives students more than a new way of reading texts. It gives them a new view of Jewish history, a new understanding of the development of Jewish ideas and, in essence, a way to appreciate our tradition's enduring truths while maintaining integrity with the world of academic scholarship.

STANDARD 3
GRADE LEVEL K-5 BENCHMARKS

There are no benchmarks for the early grades in this standard. We believe that much of the challenge in teaching towards this standard in the early years is the development of what we might term the “proto-language” of the standard. That is, while it may be developmentally inappropriate to expect very young children to look for sources in the Torah or compare texts in the light of their different historical provenances, we can nevertheless begin to use language and ideas that build the groundwork for this kind of engagement in later years.

The educational psychologist Jerome Bruner, in his famous book *The Process of Education* (1960), argued that “any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development.”

Below, you will find some of the sentence-stems and suggested big ideas that can be used by an elementary grades teacher in order to lay the foundations for this standard’s benchmarks in grades 6-12.

Suggested Big Ideas:

- “Some people believe that God wrote the Torah, and some people believe that it was written by very wonderful and wise people.”
- When we read about God and in the beginning of the book of Genesis, we see that there are two really different ways of thinking about what God is.”
- Reading the Torah is like reading a conversation between different rabbis.”

Suggested Sentence-stems:

- “Why do you think the people who wrote the Torah thought....”
- “When this story was written...”
- “What do you think the characters of the Torah were trying to tell us about...[e.g. a character]?”

STANDARD 3
GRADE LEVEL 6-8 BENCHMARKS

3.1 Offers examples of how biblical stories respond to issues of ultimate concern.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.24*

Suggested Examples:

- The nature of humankind, God's relationship to humanity, the importance of law.

Suggested Resources:

- Michael Rosenak, *Commandments and Concerns*; Moshe Greenberg, *The Biblical Grounding of Human Value*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Raise questions and discuss issues of ultimate concern.
- Reflect on personal understandings of the text.

3.2 Compares and contrasts various and contradictory biblical responses to ultimate questions.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.16*

Suggested Examples:

- Is God a majestic, awe-inspiring force of nature (Genesis 1), or the quiet voice of conscience in our ears (Genesis 2-3)? To what extent should we erect barriers against non-Jews (Deuteronomy 23:3) or allow them to enter our communities (Ruth)?

Sample Learning Activity:

- Debate different biblical texts' responses to ultimate questions.

3.3 Applies different biblical responses to ultimate questions to contemporary situations.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.25, 6.23, 8.20*

Sample Learning Activity:

- Adduce the contemporary significance or relevance of a biblical narrative.
- Explain how "truth" extends beyond "did it happen?"

3.4 Recognizes the various genres of writing in the *TaNaKH*.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.33, 4.35*

Suggested Examples:

- Narrative, legal, poetic, prophetic.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify characteristics of various genres from the biblical text.
- Compare tone, use of language and styles of genre.

3.5 Compares and contrasts “twice-told” or “thrice told” narratives in the *TaNaKH*.

Suggested Examples:

- Creation, Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Genesis 2:4-25; flood story, Genesis 6:17-22 and 7:1-5; wife/sister, Genesis 12:10-20, Genesis 20:1-18 and Genesis 26:6-14; Hagar and Ishmael, Genesis 21:8-19; manna and quail in the wilderness, Exodus 16:2-3, 6-35 and Numbers 11:4-34; appointment of Joshua, Numbers 27:12-23 and Deuteronomy 31:14-15, 23.

Suggested Resources:

- Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Bible: With Sources Revealed*, pp. 27-30; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, pp. 47-62.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare similarities and differences in events, sequence and/or facts of narratives.
- Note the use of language, names and descriptions of biblical figures and the names of God.
- Analyze various interpretations, traditional and modern, for recurring themes and/or for differences.

3.6 Compares and Contrasts Torah texts that present divergent ideas about the same issue.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.16, 2.26*

Suggested Examples:

- The Decalogue – Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-18; Slavery – Exodus 21, Leviticus 25, Deuteronomy, 15; Holidays – Leviticus 23, Numbers 28-29 and Deuteronomy 16:1-17.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Examine details of texts and note differences.
- Explore reasons for repetitions.
- Show how different passages of the Torah were formulated at different time periods.

STANDARD 3
GRADE LEVEL 9-12 BENCHMARKS

3.7 Recognizes change in “voice” in certain biblical texts.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 11:9 “That is why it was called Babel...”; Genesis 12.6 and 13.7, “The Canaanites were then in the land”; Genesis 26:33, “That is why the children of Israel to this day do not eat the thigh muscle”; Genesis 36.3, “Before any king reigned over the Israelite”; Deuteronomy 34.6, “Until this day”; II Samuel 1:18, “It is recorded in the book of Jasher.”

Sample Learning Activities:

- Note a change in style and voice when reading biblical texts.
- Use examples to examine and research how *TaNaKH* was compiled.

3.8 Knows that some biblical scholars have identified different sources in the *TaNaKH* as a method for analyzing the composition of the *TaNaKH*.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.22*

Suggested Resources:

- Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* and *The Bible: With Sources Revealed*; Nachum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (Introduction); Joel Rosenberg, “Biblical Narrative” in *Back to the Sources*, Barry Holtz, editor; *Back to the Sources*; Israel Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence* (first and last chapters); Benjamin Edidin Scolnic, “Modern Methods of Bible Study” in *Etz Hayim Torah Commentary*; Ilana Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Read a secondary source on the documentary hypothesis and/or source criticism. Articulate the theory and provide evidence used to support J, E, P and D as distinct sources in the *TaNaKH*.
- Examine characteristics, literary style, vocabulary and history of selected sources.
- Compare biblical texts from different sections of the *TaNaKH* considered to be from the same source, e.g. (D) Deuteronomy 31:24-29 to 2 Kings 22:8, the Scroll of Instruction in Deuteronomy to the discovery of the scroll during King Joash’s reign (D) Jeremiah and Deuteronomy, (P) Ezekiel and Leviticus.

3.9 Evaluates various positions that explain how the *TaNaKH* is a product of different writers.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.17*

Suggested Examples:

- Passover – Exodus 12:9; Deuteronomy 16.7, 2; Chronicles 35:11-13; Slavery – Exodus 21:2-6, 7-11; Leviticus 25:39-46; Deuteronomy 15:12-18; Collective and individual

reward and punishment – Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 99:8; Deuteronomy 7:9-10; Psalm 103:8-10; Ezekiel 18.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Trace changes in a given theme.
- Compare differing views of a topic.
- Explain how a response to an issue and/or event can be described differently.
- Explain why all views were included in the *TaNaKH*.

3.10 Articulates why historical, authorial and literary claims made by biblical texts should not always be taken at face value.

Suggested Examples:

- Biblical texts were not necessarily written in the time period of the events they are describing. Some biblical texts were ascribed to particular authors by later biblical writers or editors, e.g., Psalms to King David, Song of Songs to Solomon, second and third Isaiah to Isaiah and later chapters of Amos to Amos. Some biblical texts reflect layers from earlier and later writers/editors, e.g. Amos, Isaiah 1-39 and 34-35 and Leviticus 16:1-28 versus 16:29-34.

Suggested Resource:

- Introductions of the individual books of Prophets and Ketuvim in *The Jewish Study Bible*, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, editors.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Determine tone, style and time frames in comparing Isaiah 6 to Isaiah 44.
- Analyze a psalm without superscription for content, ideas, themes, etc. When presented with a superscription, comment on the psalm for the suitability of subscription.

3.11 Recognizes that there are various methodologies for biblical text study.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.21*

Suggested Examples:

- *Parashanut Hamiqrah*/medieval commentaries, source criticisms, literary approaches.

Suggested Resources:

- Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, “The Modern Study of the Bible” and Barry D. Wallfish, “Medieval Jewish Interpretation” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Research various interpretations of selected texts using different methodologies.
- Analyze a selection from three points of view.
- Posit a personal interpretation of selection and critique other views.

3.12 Evaluates various theories and unanswered questions regarding canonization of the *TaNaKH*.

Suggested Examples:

- TaNaKH was developed in stages. Canonization was a reaction to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. A book was chosen for canonization as a result of the community's views on sacredness and authority and inspiration. *TaNaKH* includes a wide variety of genres as well as differing and contradictory traditions.

Suggested Resources:

- Marc Zvi Brettler, "The Canonization of the Bible" in *The Jewish Study Bible*, edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler.

3.13 Raises theological and philosophical questions through the study of *TaNaKH*.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.30*

Suggested Examples:

- What can we learn from Abraham's dispute with God over Sodom and Gemorrah? What does it mean to have a covenant? What does it mean to be a chosen people? How can revelation be understood? What are the moral and ethical teachings of the Torah?

Sample Learning Activity:

- Keep a journal reacting to the material being studied.

3.14 Engages with Jewish scholarly writing that attempts to grapple with critical scholarship and complex theological and philosophical ideas.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.17, 6.22*

Suggested Examples:

- Neil Gillman, *Sacred Fragments*; Jonathan Wittenberg, *The Three Pillars of Judaism*; Elliott Dorff, *Conservative Judaism: From Our Ancestors to Our Descendents*; Ellen Frankel, *The Five Books of Miriam: A Women's Commentary on the Torah*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Write a journal entry or book review responding to a theologian's position on critical scholarship.

3.15 Articulates strategies for interpreting the text in the light of both its historical development and its final redacted form.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 1 and 2-3, Genesis 37, Numbers 16.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Interpret a self-chosen text from both source-critical and canonical perspectives.

3.16 Evaluates the position that traditional and modern critical methodologies are both valid forms of interpretation.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.23*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Reflect on purposes of specific interpretation and approach.
- Journal a personal view of the understanding of *TaNakh*.

3.17 Argues that the discussion of these issues is a central component of Jewish identity for the modern Jew.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.29*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze theological statements about Jewish identity from a variety of modern thinkers.
- Write statements of personal theology that engage with these issues.

Standard 4

Students will view the TaNaKH as the formative narrative of the Jewish people – past, present and future.

PREAMBLE

Throughout the ages, TaNaKH has served the Jewish people in many ways: a codex of law, a shared history, a moral compass and a touchstone of national unity. In all regards, the TaNaKH serves as the formative narrative of the people of Israel. A “narrative” is a “master story”, a set of texts or traditions which form the basis for our understanding of reality and our values. A formative narrative is the first place we go in order to understand why we are who we are. Therefore, as students develop a working knowledge of the biblical narrative and explore the central themes of the *TaNaKH*, they will be capable of drawing connections between the biblical text, contemporary Judaism and their own lives. At the core of this study is the opportunity for students to come to embrace the *TaNaKH* as their own formative narrative.

STANDARD 4
GRADE LEVEL K-2 BENCHMARKS

4.1 Identifies main characters of central Torah narratives.

Suggested Examples:

- Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, matriarchs and patriarchs, Joseph and his brothers, Pharaoh, Pharaoh's daughter, Moses, Miriam Aaron.

Suggested Resource:

- *Torah Aura, I can Learn Torah*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Role-play a character.
- Ask twenty questions.
- Play "yes-no" or "Who am I?" games.

4.2 Identifies main events of central Torah narratives.

Suggested Examples:

- The main stories of the patriarchal/matriarchal period, the story of the Exodus from Egypt, revelation at Mt. Sinai.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Sequence teacher-identified events in the Torah.
- Create a storyboard for a narrative.
- Arrange illustrations of the narrative according to its biblical sequence.

4.3 Recognizes central themes of the Torah narratives.

Suggested Examples:

- Creation, covenant, (the flood generation, Abraham, the Israelites), belief in one God (patriarchs and matriarchs), choices (Adam, Eve, Lot, Rebecca, Jacob, Joseph), slavery and freedom receiving the Torah, peoplehood, the land of Israel.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain a main idea in the student's own words.
- Relate a theme to a Jewish practice, e.g., taking care of the environment, saying the *Sh'ma*, celebrating Pesah, studying Torah.
- Discuss a torah theme during circle time.

4.4 Draws connections between themes and biblical characters.

Suggested Examples:

- Adam and Eve (guardians of the world), Noah (righteous in his generation), Abraham (belief in one God), Shifra and Puah (doing what is right).

Sample Learning Activities:

- Express themes in relationship to a biblical figure.
- Explain choices made by a biblical figure.

4.5 Draws connections between TaNaKH, its themes and personal experience.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Ask students to give examples of when they take care of the environment like Adam and Eve or when they have made a hard choice like Jacob, etc.

4.6 Connects relevant holiday or celebration to the biblical narrative.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 7.4*

Sample Learning Activity:

- When given part of the narrative, the student indicates the related holiday from a list of choices.
- Choose a holiday symbol, sing a song, choose a corner with a related theme when a portion of the narrative is read.

4.7 Knows that the Torah (Pentateuch) is divided into five books.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.8*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Name the five books of the Torah in order in Hebrew.
- Design/find images representing narratives for a poster of one of the five books.
- Design and illustrate a book cover for each of the five books.

4.8 Explains that the Jewish people read Torah portions regularly as part of a weekly (or triennial) cycle.

Sample Curricular Ideas:

- Create a *Simhat Torah* celebration. Teach an aspect of the weekly portion. Write the weekly parasha on the classroom whiteboard.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify the sequencing of the Torah into weekly portions.
- Link narratives to a specific book of the Torah.
- Design *parashat hashavua* cards.
- Illustrate/write about any portion of a narrative or verse of choosing.
- Illustrate a special midrash for the Torah portion.
- Place a symbol of *parashat hashavua* on a calendar

STANDARD 4
GRADE LEVEL 3-5 BENCHMARKS

4.9 Explores the themes of various biblical narratives and empathizes with the biblical characters involved.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 8.5*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Assume the role of a given character and explain his or her actions (for example, be Sarah when she learns she is to have a child at an old age, be Moses when he sees the burning bush, be Miriam at the sea).
- Role-play, play charades, dress up as a biblical figure.
- Create a storyboard for a biblical character.

4.10 Identifies recurring central themes in unfamiliar texts.

Suggested Examples:

- Covenant (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Israelites), courage and doing what's right (Noah, midwives Bat-Pharaoh, Moses), commandedness.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Create "theme cards" which students have to hold up when reading new narratives.
- Create a "concordance" or other graphic organizer of themes and central figures.

4.11 Compares and contrasts central personalities of Torah narratives.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Draw analogies between personalities and events in their lives.
- Hold a biblical personality "balloon debate".
- Represent a biblical figure at a special gathering of biblical figures.
- Create a journal in the voice of the biblical figure in response to a specific event, e.g., a chance meeting with another biblical figure.

4.12 Relates the familial connection of the personalities of the *TaNakh*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Represent the family relationships of the key personalities.
- Create and participate in a "This Is Your Life" skit.

4.13 Increases specificity and detail of personalities, themes and events of Torah narratives.

Suggested Examples:

- Dilemmas, e.g., Sarah and Hagar, Jacob and the birthright, Moses and the Egyptian, positive and negative traits of a biblical personality.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Raise questions about the motivation of a personality.
- Suggest alternative explanations to questions.

4.14 Locates the narrative sequentially in the text.

Suggested Examples:

- The Joseph stories happened before the Exodus from Egypt. Joshua led the Israelites after wanderings of the land and during the time of the conquest of Canaan.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Develop an evolving biblical timeline for the classroom as narratives are taught.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Given a list of key biblical events, place them in sequence on a timeline.
- Provide background for a new narrative, e.g., what led up to an event.

4.15 Connects observance of holidays and Shabbat to their origins in the TaNaKH.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 7.9, 7.10*

Suggested Examples:

- Shalosh R'galim, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hodesh, Purim, Shabbat.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Find an appropriate verse(s) in the text that commands the observance of a holiday.
- Identify a biblical passage in the Kiddush.
- Highlight key biblical phrases in the Kiddush and the reason for the observance.
- Connect reasons for observance to the biblical source.
- Compare Pesah *mitzrayim* to today's Pesah seder.
- Make a diorama of a holiday or celebration for then and now.
- Create a portfolio of a holiday's biblical and rabbinic name.

4.16 Identifies biblical passages located in the siddur.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 7.8*

Suggested Examples:

- Sh'ma (Deut. 6:4-9), v'Haya im Shamoah (Deut. 11:13-21), va'Yomer (Num. 15:37-41)

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify central biblical themes in passages.
- Locate passages from the TaNaKH in the siddur.
- Sing biblical verses with Torah trope in prayer service.

4.17 Explains that the TaNaKH is composed of Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify the words of the acronym *TaNaKH*.
- Design bookmarks or *humash* book covers for each of the five books and selected books from Nevi'im and Ketuvim.
- Create a *TaNaKH* poster puzzle.

4.18 Connects Modern Hebrew words to biblical verses containing those same words or roots.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.10b*

Suggested Examples:

- My “bayit” is where I live and the mishkan was God’s “bayit”, I do work with my “yad” and God does work with his “yad” (straightforward); Moses buried the Egyptian in the “chol”, but today we bury our feet in the “chol” on Tel Aviv beach (more complex); Moses asked Pharaoh to “shalach” his people, but today the “mischlachat” comes to camp (very complex).

Suggested Learning Activity:

- Give students a biblical verse and ask them to suggest modern uses of the word or root.

STANDARD 4
GRADE LEVEL 6-8 BENCHMARKS

4.19 Traces events of the narrative with greater intensity, focusing on details and complex themes.

Suggested Examples:

- Covenant, emergence of a people from slavery to freedom, revelation at Sinai, acts of rebellion, ongoing relationship of God to Israel, centrality of entering the land of Israel, Israel's election.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify a recurring central theme in a new narrative.
- Compare the theme in a new narrative to the theme in a narrative previously learned.
- Discern conflicts between the "ideal" and the narrative.
- Keep a journal of a central theme, e.g. , acts of rebellion.

4.20 Analyzes the characters in the *TaNaKH*, focusing on their motivation and personality.

➔ *Benchmarks Genius: 8.5, 8.6, 8.7*

Suggested Examples:

- Jacob's deceit, Joseph and his brothers, Joseph and Potifar's wife, Moses as a leader, Korach's rebellion, Miriam and Aaron's punishment for being critical of Moses, Pinchas' zeal, Saul's rage, David's usurpation of power, Solomon's greed.

Suggested Resources:

- Peter Pitzele, *Scripture Windows and Our Father's Wells: A Personal Encounter With the Myths of Genesis*; Ilana Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Lists three characteristics that exemplify a given character.
- Bring proof from verses to support claims.
- Explore issues of why the Torah represents human foibles.

4.21 Recognizes interweaving of biblical themes and passages throughout the siddur and other later Jewish and Israeli texts.

Suggested Examples:

- Creation, redemption, revelation, covenant.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Can be integrated with the study of tefillot, rabbinics and modern Hebrew literature.

Suggested Resource:

- Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Find references to a central biblical theme when given a prayer to analyze. Explore the significance of the biblical passages of Sh'ma (Deut. 6:4-9), v'Haya im Shamoah (Deut 11:13-21) and va'Yomer (Num. 15:37-41) as part of the "set prayer/מטבע של תפילה".
- Write a personal prayer based on a given theme.
- Create a photo journal of phrases from the siddur that reflect creation/מעשה בראשית.

4.22 Incorporates new time periods from the *TaNaKH* within a timeline.

Suggested Examples:

- Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Understand the different time frames of the Torah and Nevi'im.
- Select three events from each new time period to represent a given time period on the timeline.
- Design an illustrated timeline.
- Make a special bookmark for the time period studied.

4.23 Examines words to modern Jewish music based on biblical themes.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.13, 2.30, 8.28*

Suggested Examples:

- Debbie Friedman's "Lechi lach", "Water in the Well", "Miriam's Song", Craig Taubman, Idan Raichel's "Hinech yafah", Ehud Banai's "Hebrewman".

Sample Learning Activities:

- Choose a song for the *parashat hashavua* celebration.
- Write or create a dvar torah based on a modern song's interpretation of the biblical text.
- Compose a song based on a personality, theme or event.

4.24 Locates biblical narratives in their assumed historical timeframe and context.

Suggested Examples:

- The Exodus from Egypt may have been around 16th-13th century BCE (scholarly theories vary); David and Solomon ruled in the early iron age; Isaiah and Amos were roughly contemporaneous with Homer; Ezekiel lived a bit before Confucius; the book of Esther was probably written a little after Plato.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Write pen pal letters between contemporaneous biblical Hebrew kids and Ancient Greek/Egyptian/Chinese/etc. kids.

4.25 Relates prophetic moral and ethical messages to contemporary situations.

➔ Benchmark Genius: 3.3, 8.20, 8.21

Suggested Examples:

- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Hosea.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Evaluate a current social issue in light of the words of the prophets.
- Develop a social action project.
- Participate in Operation Isaiah (a project to collect food for the needy prior to Yom Kippur).

STANDARD 4
GRADE LEVEL 9-12 BENCHMARKS

4.26 Creates personal responses to central themes found in (for example) Genesis.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.31*

Suggested Examples:

- Nature of God, nature of humankind, free will, good and evil, religious impulse.

Suggested Resources:

- Nechama Leibowitz, *Studies in the Book of Genesis*; HaRav Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Lonely Man of Faith*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain themes in light of Judaism today and modern understandings.
- Write an article for the op-ed page of a newspaper about a theme and how it connects to a current modern issue.

4.27 Compares the Torah's revolutionary concept of monotheism to other ancient theologies.

Suggested Resources:

- John Bright, *A History of Israel*, James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: Volume 1, An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare creation stories to ancient Near Eastern myths, e.g., the Gilgamesh Epic; the Enuma Elish.
- Examine narratives relating to the covenant for their emphasis on the belief in one God, e.g., patriarchs, the Decalogue.

4.28 Compares the Torah's theologies and philosophies to their development in later Jewish texts.

Suggested Resource:

- Judith Hauptman, *Rereading the Rabbis*.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Roleplay a biblical Israelite thrust forward in time to later Judaism (à la Midrash of Moshe and Akiva).

4.29 Traces the development of Covenant (Brit) throughout the TaNaKH and later Judaism.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 7.12, 7.20*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Connect covenant to divine election.

- Connect covenant to the observance of mitzvot/laws.

4.30 Relates the historical national memory of having been “strangers in the land of Egypt” to the development of Jewish life and self-understanding.

→ *Benchmark Genius: 8.26*

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 22:20-23, 23:9, Leviticus 19:34

Sample Learning Activities:

- Locate and cite biblical sources of the concept.
- Analyze “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt...” as a generative Jewish value.
- Examine and compare implications of the concept of the Israelites or the Jewish people as a landless people and as a sovereign nation.
- Recognize the centrality of the concept in the Haggadah and siddur.
- Explore the concept of empathy: “If I were to see myself coming out of Egypt, then I would...”
- Identify other Torah values related to empathy, kindness and the role of memory.

4.31 Responds personally to the notion that “law” has been a central element of the Jewish master story from the biblical narrative through later Judaism.

→ *Benchmark Genius: 6:18, 7.21, 8.22*

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 9, Noachide Laws, Exodus 19ff – The Decalogue and Mishpatim, Book of Numbers, interweaving law and narratives, Deuteronomy, emphasis on observing laws, midrash halakhah.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Can be integrated with rabbinics.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze the nature of the revelation at Sinai (מעמד הר סיני).
- Examine the relationship of the narrative to the law.
- Recognize the centrality of biblical law in the study of midrash halakhah, Mishnah and Talmud.

4.32 Relates the main themes of megillot to their corresponding holiday.

Suggested Examples:

- The Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Jonah.

Suggested Resources:

- *The JPS Bible Commentary Esther*, commentary by Adele Berlin, *Reading Ruth*, edited by Judith Kates and Gail Reimer.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze a book or megillah for its connection to its specific holiday.
- Research the historical development of the megillah and why it was written.
- Examine the narrative of megillot for its historicity.
- Analyze the megillah for its meaning and universal truths.

4.33 Recognizes biblical passages throughout Jewish liturgy.

Suggested Examples:

- Book of Psalms, Psalms for the days of the week, Sh'ma and its accompanying berakhah, daily and Shabbat prayers.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Can be integrated with rabbinics or a course on liturgy.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze the psalms and explore why these psalms were chosen.
- Survey the Book of Psalms and select personal daily psalms.
- Extrapolate biblical themes and passages in selected prayers from weekday, Shabbat or holiday prayers.

4.34 Explores themes and concepts from Wisdom Literature (Ketuvim).

Suggested Examples:

- Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify central themes and ideas and their relevancy to modern thought.
- Explore theological and philosophical issues.
- Examine issues of theodicy.
- Write an essay on the topic of theodicy using multiple text sources.
- Compare ideas in the Book of Job to *JB: A Play in Verse* by Archibald MacLeish.

4.35 Identifies the varied literary styles found in the TaNaKH.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.33, 3.4*

Suggested Examples:

- Narratives, laws, poetry, prophecy, genealogies, etiological tables, detailed historical itineraries, descriptions of cultic rites and objects.

Suggested Resource:

- Robert Alter, *Literary Guide to the Bible*, Joel Rosenberg, “The Biblical Narrative”, *Back to the Sources*, edited by Barry Holtz.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Refer to literary form in uncovering the significance of a passage.
- Recognize metaphors and adduce the meaning.
- Distinguish between historical and ahistorical sections of the *TaNaKH*.

4.36 Knows important dates of the biblical and postbiblical periods.

Suggested Examples:

- Patriarchal period, 1800-1300 BCE; Exodus from Egypt, 1250 BCE; David, 1000 BCE, Solomon, 960 BCE; Division of Kingdom, 922 BCE; Assyrian exile of Northern Kingdom, 722 BCE; Cyrus allows return, 538 BCE; Second Temple, 515 BCE; Ezra and Nehemiah, 444 BCE; Daniel, 169 BCE.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Create a timeline of pivotal moments in Jewish history and defend the choices.

4.37 Explores the notion of myth as a narrative with enduring truth.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.23*

Suggested Resources:

- W. Gunther Plaut, “General Introduction to the Torah”, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, pp. xx-xxi; Michael Rosenak, *Commandments and Concerns*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Use myth to explain important aspects of existence.
- Appreciate the possibility of multiple interpretations of text.

4.38 Interprets the relationship between modern Hebrew and Israeli literature and culture and their biblical grounding.

Suggested Examples:

- T Carmi, *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*; J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism*; Yitzchak Rabin, Speech on signing the “Frameworks of Peace”, September 1993; Modern Israeli songs and writings.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Examine aspects of modern Israeli identity that are rooted in a perception of *TaNaKH*.
- Identify and understand biblical references and allusions in modern Hebrew literature and poetry, Jewish thought and speeches.

Standard 5

Students will, through the study of *TaNaKH*, understand and value that the Land of Israel informs and shapes the historical, theological and sociological experiences of the Jewish people.

PREAMBLE

The Land of Israel plays a central role in biblical law, narrative and poetry in the *TaNaKH* and for the development of Judaism, Jewish identity and the Jewish people. A comprehensive study of *TaNaKH* includes an exploration of the role that the Land of Israel plays in the ongoing development of the Jewish people and their nation-state. Themes that inform such an exploration include: brit, sacred space, exile and return, connections to the Land and Zionism and the modern State of Israel. Approaching these ideas through the study of *TaNaKH* will elp students make personal connections with the Land of Israel.

The politicized complexity of modern Israel can, for some Jews, be a disincentive to engage with the *TaNaKH* through this standard. In this standard, you will find a variety of benchmarks, some of which offer more straightforward understandings to the connection between *TaNaKH* and the Land of Israel and some of which offer significant and powerful opportunities for honest and critical engagement, at age-appropriate levels, with those two highly complex subject matters.

STANDARD 5
GRADE LEVEL K-2 BENCHMARKS

5.1 Explains that the Land of Israel was a special place for the Israelites in the TaNaKH and is still a special place for Jewish people today.

Suggested Resources:

- Genesis 12:1-5, Lech-lecha, Genesis 24, Abraham's instructions to a servant to find Isaac a wife; Exodus story; songs and pictures about modern Israel; teachers or parents who come from Israel; *Shalom Sesame*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Express ways that the Land of Israel is special.
- Create a scrapbook, draw pictures, contribute to a class montage.
- Sing songs based on TaNaKH text about the land of Israel: "*Ufaratza*", "*Eretz Zavot Halav*", "*Lechi Lach*".
- Learn "*Hatikvah*" and its significance to the Jewish people.

5.2 Explains that the Torah tells of the brit that God made with Abraham and Abraham's family to give them the Land of Israel.

Suggested Resource:

- Debbie Friedman "*Lechi Lach*" ("And You Shall Be a Blessing") on CD.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Give examples of promises between two people.
- Role-play Genesis 12: Act out the story from the TaNaKH, respond to God's promise, e.g. ask, "You are going to Canaan. What are you going to bring?"

5.3 Explains that even in Ancient times, the Land of Israel was also special for many other people.

Suggested Examples:

- Phoenician and Assyrian traders, Canaanite farmers.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Role-play conversations between Abraham and people he meets while wandering through the Land of Israel.

5.4 Associates the "seven special species"/*שבעת המינים* with the land of Israel.

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 3:7, description of the Land; Deuteronomy 8:8, "a land of wheat and barley, of vines and figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey."

Suggested Resources:

- Matt Biers-Ariel, *The Seven Species, Stories and Recipes Inspired by the Foods of the Bible*, UAH Press; Azaria Alon, *The Natural History of the Land of the Bible*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Design a poster, graphic or shadowbox to display the seven species.
- Prepare special foods with the species.
- Create a story about the Land of Israel to accompany the recipe.
- Illustrate a “land flowing with milk and honey”/ **ארץ זבת חלב ודבש**.

5.5 Demonstrates knowledge of key places mentioned in the Torah.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.5*

Suggested Examples:

- Haran, Canaan, Egypt, Sinai desert (midbar).

Sample Learning Activities:

- Place Haran, Canaan, Egypt and the Sinai desert in the correct location on a map of the patriarchal period.
- Trace the wanderings of the patriarchs and matriarchs in and out as well as within the land of Israel.
- Highlight a map; use a Velcro board.
- Walk a floor map.

STANDARD 5
GRADE LEVEL 3-5 BENCHMARKS

5.6 Connects the ברית/brit between God and Abraham to the Land of Israel.

→ *Benchmark Genius: 7.12*

Suggested Examples:

- Walking the land and placing altars, Genesis 12, 13:17-18; purchasing the cave of the Machpela, Genesis 23.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Note the differences between the covenant with Noah and the covenant with Abraham.
- Analyze the various ways to show possession of the territory as seen in the narratives about Abraham.
- Keep an itinerary of places and events of Abraham's journey.

5.7 Constructs personal-midrashic interpretations of biblical characters' motivations and thinking when they leave Israel despite having been promised it by God.

→ *Benchmark Genius: 2.9, 4.9, 8.5*

Suggested Examples:

- Abraham and Sarah leave Israel in Genesis 12:10; Isaac intends to leave Israel in Genesis 26; Jacob leaves Israel in Genesis 28-29.

Suggested Learning Activity:

- Write a journal entry in which one of the forefathers reflects on what he will gain from remaining in Israel versus leaving it.

5.8 Associates the sacredness of space in the Torah with places of interactions with God.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 12:8, 13:18, 15, 21:33, 22:14, Abraham's altars; Genesis 15, Hagar and Beer-lahai-roi; Genesis 21:22, Isaac's altar; Genesis 28:10-16; 32:25-33, Jacob's ladder and struggle with the angel; Exodus 3, Moses and the burning bush; Exodus 20, Har Sinai; Exodus-27, Mishkan.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify sacred places in the *TaNakh*.
- Explain why the Land of Israel is called ארץ הקודש.
- Describe what it feels like to be in a sacred place.
- Design a poster "Achen yesh adonai bamakom hazeh v'anochi lo yadati." (אכן יש ה' (במקום הזה ואנכי לא ידעתי)

5.9 Demonstrates knowledge of additional key locations mentioned in the Torah text.

Suggested Examples:

- Yam haMeleach, Sodom, Genesis 14; Moriah, Be'er Sheva, Genesis 21:15; Sh'chem, Hevron, Ma'arat haMachpela, Genesis 24; Yama, Negba, Tzafona, Kedmah, Genesis 28:14.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Place the Negev, Yamah-Negbah-Tzafonah-Kedmah, Moriah, Be'er Sheva, Sh'chem, Hevron and Yam HaMelach in the correct location on a map of the patriarchal/matriarchal period.
- Indicate the journey of Abraham and Sarah, Moses and other biblical characters on the map.
- Write or paste a relevant verse to a map.
- Make an individual map of the biblical time period.

5.10 Connects the *Shalosh R'galim* with the land of Israel.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 7.14*

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 23:12-19, 34:18-23; Leviticus 23, Numbers 28-29, Deuteronomy 16, the agricultural significance of the festivals; Passover-Hag Ha'Aviv, Shavuot-Hag Ha'Katzir, Succot-Hag Ha'Asif.

Sample Learning Activities:

- List the season and agricultural activity originally associated with each festival.
- Identify a biblical agricultural name for each festival.
- Explain the significance of the pilgrimage (aliyat haregel) with being in the land of Israel.
- Design and keep a holiday portfolio with a section on the connection to the Land of Israel.

5.11 Connects the concept of living in the Land of Israel today to examples in the Torah.

Suggested Examples:

- Abraham and Sarah, Jacob, Moses, Joseph's bones, Naomi, the Israelites all desired to go or return to the Land.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Can be integrated into the Israel Curriculum.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify aliyah as a positive and potential component of Jewish identity as illustrated in the Torah.
- Role-play biblical characters about feelings about Israel.
- Create slogans for making aliyah.
- Communicate with new olim (via email or teleconference).
- Discuss what it would be like to make aliyah.

STANDARD 5
GRADE LEVEL 6-8 BENCHMARKS

5.13 Explains what biblical agricultural laws tell about Israelite society in the Land of Israel.

Suggested Examples:

- Mitzvot sh'tluyot b'aretz/מצוות שתלויות בארץ e.g., treatment of strangers, orphans, widows, poor people, Deuteronomy 15; peah, leket, shich'chah, Leviticus 19:9, Deuteronomy 5:12-15; sh'nat haYovel, Leviticus 25:15; shemitah, Leviticus 2.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Evaluate how mitzvot relating to the Land of Israel help create a sacred place.
- Connect commandments/mitzvot associated with having the Land with social responsibilities and concern for the environment.
- Identify one biblical law relating to the Land and apply it to a modern environmental issue.
- Research organizations in Israel today that address issues associated with mitzvot regarding the Land.
- Create an ad campaign on how to protect the Land.

5.14 Identifies the role that the Land of Israel plays in the ongoing identity formation of the Jewish people.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4:21 and passim*

Suggested Examples:

- Numbers, wanderings in the desert and getting to the Land; Deuteronomy, Moses's plea to see the Land, Naomi, Esther, exile of the two kingdoms – the impact of galut (exile).

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze narratives for the poignancy of having the Land or being landless.
- Discuss what it means to have a covenant and not have the Land.
- Describe the universal desire for nationalism and relate this to the biblical roots of modern Zionism.
- Defend Moses's case to enter the Land.
- Plan and participate in a United Nations convention or World Zionist Congress.
- Draw political cartoons.

5.15 Explores the tension between the importance of the land of Israel and other central mitzvot or values to the Jewish people.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 7.26 and passim*

Suggested Examples:

- Deuteronomy 8:19-20, 11:13-17, 28:15-68.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Conduct a balloon debate between “land-based” and “non-land based” commandments or values.

5.16 Explores the complex questions around the displacement of other nations in order to make room for the Israelites’ legitimate need for a land of their own.

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 23:27-33, Deuteronomy 7:1-5.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Do a bibliodrama exploring Abraham’s feelings about his need for a home along with a Canaanite farmer’s feelings about his connection to the land.

5.17 Recognizes that the notion of “exile and return” begins in the biblical text.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 12, tension between lech-lecha and Abraham’s descent to Egypt; Genesis 24:1-9, Abraham’s search for Isaac’s wife, Genesis 28:10-20, God’s assurance to Jacob to return to the Land; Genesis 28:28-31, Jacob’s request to be buried in the Land; Genesis 38-50, Exodus 13:15, Joseph, from exile to diaspora to burial; Numbers 32:1-11, tribes on the east side of the Jordan.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Identify two biblical figures whose actions are conflicted regarding exile and living in the Land.
- Interview a biblical character living in *galut*, e.g., Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Esther, Naomi.
- Take a position in Four Corners on the topic.

5.18 Gives examples of how biblical archaeology can help illuminate aspects of the biblical era.

Suggested Examples:

- Hazor, Joshua 11, Judges 4, Meggido, I Kings.

Suggested Resources:

- Lee Levine, “Biblical Archeology”, Etz Haim Torah and Commentary; The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures, Volume I, edited by James B. Pritchard.

Suggested Website Resources:

- The Israel Museum website, Archeology Wing: “The Jewish Virtual Library, Virtual Israel Experience”, Archeology Section, Sponsored by the Israel Foreign Ministry, An American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Bring examples from archeology that illuminate aspects of daily life in the Land of Israel during biblical times.
- Examine archeological finds and their impact on our understanding of biblical text.
- Write an editorial of a biblical event based on an archeological find and a second based on biblical text.

5.19 Recognizes the centrality of the ברית/covenant as it relates to the Land of Israel.

Suggested Examples:

- Abraham, Genesis 12; The stars and Brit Bein HaBetarim, Genesis 15; Jacob, 28:14; spying out the Land, Numbers 13 and 14; inheritances of the Land and the daughters of Tzelophad, Numbers 26-27; consequences of not following the brit, Deuteronomy 4:25-32, 11:13-12:1, 30:1-5, Book of Judges, Book of Kings, Solomon's prayer I Kings 8:22-37.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Articulate the Torah's theological position connecting observance and inheriting the land.
- Examine historical rationales for not inheriting the Land.
- Explain how biblical claims to the Land and modern claims differ.

5.20 Explores the tension between the need for a "home" for the Jewish people and the perspectives of others who might also call that place home.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 5:19, Deuteronomy 7:1-11, Book of Joshua, Book of Judges.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Raise questions regarding relationships to the inhabitants of the Land in light of "... a great nation with just laws."
- Ask the question: Could Abraham have established a monotheistic Israelite culture if there were pagan Canaanites still all over the Land?
- Role-play a position in a class "town hall" meeting.

5.21 Demonstrates how and why the map of biblical Israel evolved over biblical time.

Suggested Examples:

- The periods of Abraham, Joshua, Judges, David, Solomon, Split Kingdoms, 722 BCE and 586 BCE, Ezra-Nehemiah; Compare Genesis 15:18 and Deuteronomy 1:6-8 with Numbers 33-34.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify the various borders of the Land of Israel on a map.
- Discuss the impact of changing the borders on the people living in and out of the Land of Israel.

- Create a PowerPoint or other form of presentation with the changing map of the different time periods.

STANDARD 5
GRADE LEVEL 9-12 BENCHMARKS

5.22 Understands the significance of the use of nature in biblical poetry and metaphor.

Suggested Examples:

- Metaphors and similes relating to the Land of Israel and its flora, fauna and topography.
- I Samuel 2:21 – “O hills of Gilboa, Let there be no dew or rain on you.”
- I Kings 4:33 – “... from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs from the wall.”
- Song of Songs 2:1 – “I am the Rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.”
- Isaiah 35:1 – “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, the desert shall rejoice.”
- Isaiah 11:6 – “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid: the calf, the beast of prey and the fatling together.”
- Joel 2:22 – “Fig tree and vine have yielded their strengths.”

Suggested Resource:

- Azaria Alon, *The Natural History of the Land of the Bible*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain a biblical reference and its connection to the Land of Israel.
- Suggest a rationale for the use of a particular allusion to nature.

5.23 Explores the connection between exile from the Land of Israel and the transition to a text-based identity.

Suggested Examples:

- Nehemiah 9, move from centralized sacrificial worship to diffuse prayer, pilgrimage festivals celebrated in homes and synagogues, fulfillment of laws connected to the Land replaced with the study of those laws, scroll of Esther.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain how exile from the Land created a need for new rituals.
- Trace a biblical ritual from its Land-based origins to text-based observance, e.g., sacrifices, Pesah observance.
- Analyze the use of “writings” in exilic works.

5.24 Discuss the development of biblical theology relating to exile and return to the Land.

Suggested Examples:

- Ruth, Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 11:14-21, 18, Hosea 14.

Suggested Resources:

- Michael Fishbane, “Notes to Commentary on Haftaret”, *JPS Bible Commentary*, *Haftaret*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare pre-exilic and post-exilic prophecies in relationship to sin and punishment.
- Develop the concept of teshuvah based on prophetic voices.

5.25 Evaluates the tension between biblical texts advocating holy “place” and biblical texts advocating holy “time”.

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 20:8-11 versus Deuteronomy 13:8-19, Leviticus 23 versus texts on the Tabernacle.

Suggested Resources:

- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: an Island in Time and Israel: An Echo of Eternity*.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Categorize passages from the *TaNaKH*, Rabbinic Literature or the Siddur in terms of the emphasis on time versus place.

5.27 Examines the relationship between the TaNaKH and the history and literature of Zionism and the State of Israel.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Can be combined with a History of Zionism course.

Suggested Resources:

- Megillat Ha’atzmaut, Theodore Herzl and the Uganda Plan; A.D. Gordon; Rav Kook.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze different phases of biblical Israel’s national development and the political anthropological and historical circumstances that influenced particular developments.
- Select a modern Israeli political, literary or religious text, personality, music or issue and analyze the extent to which the item of interest is rooted in biblical themes.

Standard 6

Students will develop an appreciation for the sacredness of the TaNaKH as the primary record of the meeting between God and the people of Israel and as an essential text through which Jews continue to grapple with theological, spiritual and existential questions.

PREAMBLE

What is God? How do I understand my relationship with the natural world? How should I interact with others, be they strangers or significant people in my life? How do I understand my life in meaningful ways? These are just some of the profound theological, spiritual and existential questions that the reflective human being grapples with. Engaging with the biblical text by definition includes engaging with theological and spiritual concerns: what it means to be created in “God’s image”, the sacredness of our biblical texts: the role of Torah study today as an avenue for “meeting with God”, and the multiple ways to describe, know and relate to God.

The biblical text, as the meeting place between humanity and God, is not just a theological treatise. It is a resource and springboard for our most profound “ultimate” questions. Exploration of the theological, ritual and existential aspects of the *TaNaKH* will help students to develop their own personal theologies. It will also help them explore Jewish responses to the ultimate questions of “life, the universe and everything”.

STANDARD 6
K-2 BENCHMARKS

6.1 Demonstrates and articulates the need for respectful behaviors toward the *sefer* Torah.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 8.1*

Suggested Examples:

- Stands when the ark is open, kisses the Torah as it passes, gets ready to study Torah in a respectful way, understands that a *humash* and a *TaNakh* do not go directly on the floor.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Actively participate in teacher-generated, child-friendly Torah rituals.
- Regularly demonstrate respect for the Torah and ritual objects that contain sections of the Torah, e.g., *mezuzot*, *tefillin*, *humashim*, *siddurim*.

6.2 Knows the appropriate berakhot and procedures for learning and reading the Torah.

Suggested Examples:

- La'asok bedivrei Torah; Ha'arev-na; berakhot for aliyah to the Torah.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Recite appropriate *berakhot* for reading the Torah.
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the procedures for talking the Torah from the ark, e.g., standing/kissing the torah.

6.3 Understands that the torah has always been central to Jewish life.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.8, 8.4*

Suggested Curricular Activities:

- Invite a Torah scribe/סופר to demonstrate how a Torah is written and made and how verses from the Torah are found in *mezuzot* and *tefillin*, teach students to chant selected verses of Torah sections being taught, create a Torah bulletin board.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Demonstrate an awareness of everyday symbols of Torah.
- Design a *mezuzah* for personal use.
- Contribute to a torah bulletin board.

6.4 Recognizes a variety of different names for God.

Suggested Examples:

- Hashem; Adonai; Elohim/Eloheinu; El.

Suggested Resource:

- Sandy Sasso, *In God's Name*.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Recognize the various biblical names of God and the different meanings they convey.

6.5 Summarizes and embellishes dialogues between God and a variety of Genesis and Exodus personalities.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.2*

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 2, Adam and Eve; Genesis 4, Cain and Abel; Genesis 6-9, Noah; Genesis 12ff, Abraham; Genesis 18, Sarah; Genesis 28, Jacob; Exodus 1, Shifrah and Puah; Exodus 3ff, Moses, Zipporah.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Develop and participate in role-playing scenarios or similar performances that demonstrate an understanding of the relevant texts.
- Role-play; dress up as a biblical figure.
- Illustrate dialogues.

STANDARD 6
GRADE LEVEL 3-5 BENCHMARKS

6.6 Applies the notion that all people are created *b'tzelem Elohim* to real-life situations which could be transformed through the conviction of human sacredness.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 8.12*

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 1:27, 9:6

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify the unique nature of each individual and self as a manifestation of God's image imprinted upon each person.
- Create a collage of diverse images of people.
- Ask students to write on the topic "what makes me unique".
- Demonstrate kindnesses to others.

6.7 Gives examples from the range of mitzvot in the Torah that expand the concept of *b'tzelem Elohim*.

➔ *Benchmark Genius 7.7*

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 2:1-3, Shabbat; Genesis 18, visiting the sick/ביקור חולים, welcoming guests/הכנסת אורחים; Leviticus 19, Holiness Code.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain the connection between *b'tzelem Elohim* and the performance of certain mitzvot.
- Display respectful behaviors towards others.

6.8 Examines the impact of divine interactions on biblical characters.

Suggested Examples:

- Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Miriam.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Articulate, suggest or embellish the emotional experience of various biblical personalities who interact with God.
- Develop "continued" dialogue, speaking in the voice of biblical personalities.
- Anticipate the actions of a biblical personality.
- Given a dilemma, give a response in the voice of the biblical personality, e.g., "What would Sarah say or do?"
- Examine how Joseph's "knowing" God is different.

6.9 Constructs creative representations of Sinai as a significant experience of the Jewish people.

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 19, Exodus 19:16, “all the people in the camp trembled...”, Exodus 20:15, “seeing sounds”, Deuteronomy 29, “those that are not with us today”.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Draw/paint an abstract picture of what the scene at Sinai may have been like.
- Create a journal that records a “personal account” of being at Sinai.
- Write before and after accounts of being at Sinai.
- Share a journal with classmates.
- Use watercolors to illustrate the experience of Sinai.

6.10 Constructs personal responses to a variety of biblical metaphors for God.

Suggested Examples:

- *El Shadai, El Elyon*, judge, burning bush, warrior, cloud/fire, eagles’ wings, creator, commander, master.

Suggested Resources:

- Sandy Sasso, *In God’s Name and God’s Paintbrush*, Douglas Woods, *Old Turtle*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Develop students’ metaphors for God.
- Explain the choice of the personal metaphor.
- Compare the students’ metaphors for God to those in the biblical narratives.

6.11 Compares the differing evolving concepts of God that people associate with biblical texts.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 2, Adam’s transitional view of God from creator to responsibility-giver, Genesis 18:25, Abraham’s use of “judge”/שופט; Genesis 16:13, Hagar’s use of “God of seeing or seeing me”/אל ראי; Genesis 31:42, Jacob’s use of “Fear of Isaac”/פחד יצחק in conversation with Laban; Exodus 3, God’s conversation with Moses, “God of your ancestors...”/אל-הי אבותיכם, and “I will be what I will be”/אהיה אשר אהיה.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain how biblical characters have evolving relationships with God.
- Compare different biblical characters’ experiences with God, e.g., Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Isaac and Jacob, Abraham and Sarah, Joseph and Jacob.
- Engage in conversation about differing views of God.

6.12 Recognizes that names of God require special treatment.

Suggested examples:

- Tetragrammaton, El, Elohim, Yud-Yud, Eheyeh-Asher-Eheyeh, Shaddai, Tzevaot.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Use appropriate names for the Tetragrammaton.
- Participate in designing and decorating a class *genizah*.
- Use the *genizah* appropriately and respectfully.

STANDARD 6
GRADE LEVEL 6-8 BENCHMARKS

6.13 Explores why the text might have chosen to use particular metaphors for God and/or for God's presence in particular contexts.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 18:25 and Psalms 7:12, "judge"; Exodus 3:2, "burning bush"; Exodus 13:12, cloud/fire; Exodus 15:13, "warrior"; Exodus 19:4, "eagles' wings"; Joshua 3:11, "Master"; Isaiah 45:7, "Creator"; I Samuel 1:11, "hosts".

Sample Learning Activities:

- List the attributes of a metaphor and interpret how the text uses the metaphor to understand God.
- Select two or more texts with one or more metaphors of God and suggest why the metaphors differ.

6.14 Constructs a personal narrative for the place of Torah study in post-bar/bat mitzvah Jewish identity.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 7.19*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Recognize that the study of Torah deals with theological and spiritual issues.
- Understand the *parashiyot* of *Sh'ma* in relationship to the mitzvah of *limmud Torah*.
- Keep a journal responding to the impact of *limmud Torah* on the student's Jewish practice.

6.15 Grapples with the both the inspiring and the troubling aspects of the idea that God "speaks".

Sample Learning Activities:

- Write a short exploratory essay considering why the text says that God "speaks".
- Share personal responses to "God speaks".

6.16 Analyzes how various human/divine dialogues shed light on the divine/human relationship.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 2, Adam and Eve; Genesis 4, Cain; Genesis 6-9, Noah; Genesis 12, Abraham; Genesis 18, Sarah; Genesis 28, Jacob; Exodus 3ff, Moses; Numbers 12, Miriam and Aaron.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain that human/divine interactions in the Torah impact our understanding of God and the very nature of the human/divine relationship.
- Compare episodes of a biblical passage before and after an encounter with God.
- Keep a journal or chronicle a personal "life-changing" experience.

6.17 Explores the nature of revelation at Sinai as understood by traditional and contemporary sources.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.9, 3.14*

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 19, Deuteronomy 29.

Suggested Commentaries:

- Rashi, Exodus 19:17, “Kofeh aleihem har kegigit”, Midrash Rabbah Shmot, Exodus 24:7, “Na’aseh v’nishma”.

Suggested Resources:

- Eliot N. Dorff, “Medieval and Modern Theories of Revelation”, *Etz Hayim Torah and Commentary*, pp. 1400-1405, Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed* II:16, A.J. Heschel, *God in Search of Man*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Articulate why revelation is central to an understanding of the Torah.
- Compare Exodus 19 to Deuteronomy 29 and note the implications of differences.
- Direct and act in a reenactment of *ma’amad har Sinai* based on Exodus 19.
- Compare artworks, offering different concepts of the giving of the Torah at Sinai.
- Write a journal entry, “I ‘saw’ the voices...”

6.18 Examines how biblical law influences the theological and spiritual experiences of the Jewish people.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.31*

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 20-24, Yitro, Mishpatim; Leviticus 1-6, cult law; Leviticus 19, Holiness Code; Deuteronomy 13ff.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify legal passages in the *TaNakh* and consider their spiritual impact on biblical Israel.
- Understand the centrality of law in God’s relationship to the Jewish people.
- Analyze how legal passages serve as the basis for the later development of the Jewish legal system.

6.19 Explores the varying views of God in the books of the Early Prophets (Nevi’im Rishonim) and selected Megillot.

Suggested Examples:

- Early prophets, Books of Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings; Megillat Esther; Megillat Ruth.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain the biblical text's view of God's relationship to the Israelites.
- Compare varying views of God as presented in the texts.
- Analyze the significance of the text when God is "absent".

6.20 Relates personal conceptions of God to conceptions of God in the Torah text.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.18*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify conceptions of God as portrayed in the *TaNaKH*.
- Articulate conceptions of God based on personal experiences.

6.21 Applies the notion of *kedushah* in its various contexts to various contemporary situations.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 8.17*

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 2:1-3, sacred time (Shabbat); Exodus 19, Holy Pople/**גוי קדוש**; Leviticus 19:2, God/**כי קדוש אני**; Exodus 25:8, Sacred space/**משכן**.

Suggested Sample Activities:

- Developing a class *tzedakah* or community service project; planning an environmental project, e.g., "Adopt-a-Spot", helping students express awe and wonder, becoming the "class that cares", creating sacred space, creating sacred time, e.g., Shabbat, holidays.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Can be integrated with the study of human sexuality and/or a unit on drug education.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Generate a list of actions in the students' own lives and in the lives of those around them that reflect, "You shall be holy for I am holy/**קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני**".
- Reflect upon how the students' actions are rooted in mitzvot that are part of an understanding of the *kedushah*.
- Identify three biblical texts in which the concept of *kedushah* is central to the theme of the text.
- Explain what is holy about Shabbat, the Land of Israel, the Jewish people and God.
- Illustrate activities for a week day and for Shabbat.
- Write an essay on the topic "Making Saturday into Shabbat".

STANDARD 6
GRADE LEVEL 9-12 BENCHMARKS

6.22 Discusses different contemporary perspectives of Revelation.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.8, 3.14*

Suggested Resources:

- Elliott N. Dorff, *Conservative Judaism: Our Ancestors to our Descendants* and “Medieval and Modern Theories of Revelation”, *Etz Hayim Torah and Commentary*, pp. 1400-1405, and *Emet Ve-Emunah*, pp. 19-21; Merle Feld, “Standing at Sinai”; Neil Gilman, *Sacred Fragments*; A.J. Heschel, *God in Search of Man*; Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed* II:16; Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare and contrast aspects of varying views of revelation.
- Consider evidence for different experiences of revelation based on an era, age, gender, etc.
- Suggest a personal understanding of revelation.

6.23 Gives personal interpretations of the difference between theological and historical/scientific truths.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.3, 3.16, 4.37*

Suggested Example:

- The teachings of Torah and theories of history/science will sometimes appear to be in conflict.

Suggested Resource:

- Stephen J. Gould, *Rock of Ages*, “Non-Overlapping Magesteria”.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Compare and contrast various concepts found in both the *TaNakh* and history/science.

6.24 Uses the biblical text as a resource and springboard for the discussion of “issues of ultimate concern”.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.1, 3.13, 8.22*

Suggested Examples:

- Origins of the basic rules of society, insights into human behavior, issues of faith, hope and despair, life and death, radical amazement, treatment of the other.

Suggested Resource:

- Michael Rosenak, *Commandments and Concerns*, chapter 6.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Consider an issue of ultimate concern and demonstrate how the *TaNaKH* gives us insights and helps us think in a more sophisticated way about the issue.

6.25 Explores the anthropomorphizing of God in the *TaNaKH*.

Suggested Examples:

- God's hand, God's voice, outstretched arm, divine speech, see my back not my face.

Suggested Resource:

- Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed*, I:50-60.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify anthropomorphisms in the text and reflect on their purpose.
- Explore why the *TaNaKH* uses anthropomorphic images to convey divinity to humankind.

6.26 Explains the development of prophecy as a channel for the divine word.

Suggested Examples:

- Araham, Genesis 18:17; Moses, Exodus 32:7-13, Numbers 11:1-2; 12:13, Deuteronomy 5:5, 9:12; I Samuel 28:6, Isaiah 42, 1, 8; Jeremiah 15:91; Ezekiel 3:14, 13:4-5.

Suggested Resources:

- Yonachan Muffs, *Love and Joy: Law, Language and Religion in Ancient Israel*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Examine the prophet's role in the divine/human equation.
- Explain the role of the prophet of "intercessor".
- Trace changes in the role of the prophet.
- Examine the role of interpretation in seeking an understanding of the divine voice today.

6.27 Extrapolates personal meaning from a variety of human/divine dialogues.

➔ *Benchmark Genius 2.31*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain how a variety of human/divine dialogues in the *TaNaKH* have come to influence the students' understanding of God and humanity.
- Connect personal theological struggles with those of biblical characters.
- Develop and articulate a personal theology using biblical sources and rabbinic understandings.
- Create a journal to record a personal understanding of "It is not in the heavens" (Deuteronomy 29:11-15).

6.28 Proposes personal responses to the multiple and complex questions around being a “chosen people”.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.26*

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 19:4-5, 24:7-8, Deuteronomy 26:17, the relationship of election to covenant.

Suggested Resource:

- Rebecca Eugene Borowitz, *Liberal Judaism*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Examine the relationship of election to covenant.
- Consider an issue in regard to all created “in God’s image”.
- Explore issues of “chosen-ness”, e.g., Borowitz’s “chosen for superiority, chosen for responsibility, chosen to suffer”.
- Debate the concept of “chosen-ness” in today’s world.

6.29 Considers how different genres of literature in the *TaNaKH* influence thinking about divine/human and human/human relationships.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 1.33*

Suggested Examples:

- Narrative, poetic, legal and prophetic sections as well as wisdom literature offer various understandings of the divine/human relationship.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Analyze the variety of theological, spiritual and existential modes that are found in various genres of biblical literature.

6.30 Views the TaNaKH as a source for developing and articulating a personal theology.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.13, 7.25*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Identify elements of TaNaKH that are critical to developing a personal philosophy.
- Develop and articulate a personal theology using biblical, rabbinic and modern sources.

Standard 7

Students will understand, through the study of *TaNaKH* and its interpretations, the role of *mitzvot* in the shaping of the ethical character and religious practices of the individual and the Jewish people.

PREAMBLE

Judaism is commonly understood as a religion of deed that finds its origins in the Torah. The relationship between contemporary Jewish religious practice and biblical religion is a complex one. This standard offers students the opportunities to learn about the connections between contemporary *mitzvah* practices, traditional norms of rabbinic practice and their biblical origins. Included in this standard are benchmarks that deal with the place of *mitzvot* in the covenant with God, the relationship of ritual and ethical laws, the centrality of law, the identification of the biblical origins of current-day mitzvot and the evolution of mitzvah practice.

STANDARD 7
GRADE LEVEL K-2 BENCHMARKS

7.1 Understands that the Torah tells of the Jewish people's relationship with God, which includes the fulfillment of *mitzvot*.

Suggested Examples:

- Giving of the law, Exodus 19-20; Sh'ma, Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Shabbat; holidays; Torah study; how one treats another; how one acts.

Suggested Resource:

- Bradley Artson, *It's a Mitzvah*.

7.2 Uses certain key phrases that denote ethical and ritual *mitzvot*.

Suggested Examples:

- Remember the Sabbath (זכור את יום השבת).
- Honor your father and mother (כבד את אביך ואת אמך).
- Love your fellow as yourself (ואהבת לרעך כמוך).
- Seven days you shall eat *matzot*. (שבעת ימים מצות תאכלו).
- You shall teach your children (ושננתם לבניך ודברתם בם).

7.3 Identifies *mitzvot* derived from the narrative of the weekly Torah portion.

Suggested Examples:

- Shabbat, Genesis 2:1-3; protecting the environment (שומרי אדמה), Genesis 2:15; belief in one God, Genesis 12; visiting the sick (ביקור חולים), welcoming guests (הכנסת אורחים), pursuing peace and justice (אוהב שלום- רודף שלום), Genesis 13 and 18; humane treatment of animals (צער בעלי חיים), Genesis 21:47; kashrut, Genesis 32:22-32.

7.4 Gives examples of the observing the *mitzvot* of Shabbat and festivals.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.6*

Suggested Examples:

- Shabbat, Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11; Festivals, Exodus 23:14 and Deuteronomy 16; Rosh Hashanah, Numbers 29:1-3; Yom Kippur, Leviticus 23:27-32 and Numbers 29:7-11; Sukkot, Leviticus 23:33-43; Pesah, Exodus 12; Shavu'ot, Number 28:26-31.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Associate ritual objects with specific holidays and Shabbat.
- Create a collage of a holiday with its holiday symbols.
- Design and make ritual objects for personal use.
- Participate in a weekly *oneg Shabbat*, take part in a model *seder*, decorate a *sukkah*.

7.5 Explains that certain daily mitzvot and rituals originate in the Torah.

Suggested Examples:

- *Tzedakah*, Leviticus 19:9, Deuteronomy 15:8; *limmud Torah*; *teffillin* and *mezuzah*, Deuteronomy 6:8-9; *tzitzit*, Numbers 15:38-39; *kashrut*, Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 13.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Contribute to a class mural of daily *mitzvot*.
- Explain the symbolism of *mezuzah*, *teffillin* and *tzitzit*.
- Create a special *tzedakah* campaign.

7.6 Applies basic facts about the observance of dietary laws.

Suggested Examples:

- Separation of milk and meat, permitted animals, Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 13; *berakhot* for eating various foods.

Suggested Resources:

- United Synagogue CD-ROM “Kosher: Sanctifying the Ordinary”, Children’s section; Deborah Uchill Miller, *Fins and Scales: A Kosher Tale*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Create menus for a kosher dairy restaurant and a kosher meat restaurant.
- Recite appropriate *berakhot* for bread, food, snacks and beverages.
- Design a poster of a kosher food with an accompanying *berakhot*.

STANDARD 7
GRADE LEVEL 3-5 BENCHMARKS

7.7 Categorizes diversely different *mitzvot* according to their respective deeds and behaviors.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.7*

Suggested Examples:

- Do not wrong anyone in speech. (Lev. 25:17) (לא תונו איש את עמיתו)
- Honor the old and wise (Lev.19:32) (לפני שיבה תקום)
- Do not place a stumbling block before the blind. (Lev. 19:14) (לפני עור לא תתן מכשול)
- Open your hand to your fellow person who is poor. (Deut. 16:11) (פתח תפתח את ידך לאחיך לעניך)
- Rejoice in your festivals. (Deut 16:14) (ושמחת בחגך)
- Write them on the *mezuzot* upon your doorposts and gates. (Deut 6:9) (וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך)
- You shall have no other Gods (Exod. 2:2) (לא יהיה לך אלוהים אחרים על פני)

Sample Learning Activities:

- Categorize a list of *mitzvot* into holiday, Shabbat, treatment of others, *kashrut*, ecology and *limmud Torah* categories.
- Write and act in a skit based on a *mitzvah*.
- Illustrate or make a collage of *mitzvot*.

7.8 Connects certain daily prayers to their origins as *mitzvot* in the Torah.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.15*

Suggested Examples:

- *Sh'ma*, Deuteronomy 6:4-9; *birkat hamazon*, Deuteronomy 8:10.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Integrate with rabbinics or *tefillah* curriculum.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Examine why the *Sh'ma* is central to daily prayer.
- Offer a personal interpretation of why we recite the *birkat hamazon* after meals.

7.9 Compares and contrasts biblical holiday *mitzvot* with modern-day traditions.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.15*

Suggested Examples:

- *Shalosh Regalim*, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hodesh, Shabbat.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Highlight an appropriate verse(s) in a text that commands observance of a holiday.
- Connect reasons for the observance to a biblical source.
- Compare Pesah *mitzrayim* to today's Pesah *seder*.

- Create a diorama of a holiday or celebration for then and now.
- Create a portfolio of a holiday's biblical and rabbinic names.

7.10 Give examples of mitzvot whose observance today has evolved since biblical times.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.15*

Suggested Examples:

- Rabbis of the Mishnah, Talmud and beyond examined the words of the Torah and wrote laws as to how to fulfill the *mitzvot*, e.g., developed the *seder* from the biblical commandment for Passover sacrifice; set times when to recite the *Sh'ma*; interpreted "don't cook a kid in its mother's milk" to mean separating milk from meat – no eating, cooking or deriving any pleasure from the simultaneous use of milk and meat.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Examine how the *mitzvah* is written in the Torah.
- Note similarities and differences in the Torah's descriptions to the practices of today.

7.11 Creates representations of traditional interpretations of holiday rituals and objects cited in the Torah.

Suggested Examples:

- Rosh Hashanah and blowing the *shofar*, Genesis 22 and Leviticus 29:1; Yom Kippur and fasting, Leviticus 23:27; Sukkot and *sukkah*, *lulav* and *etrog*, Leviticus 23:40; Pesah and the *seder* and eating *matzah* and *maror*, Exodus 13.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Write a story in which the performance of the ritual or the ritual object is central to the story.
- Recite appropriate *berakhot* for specific rituals.
- Ascribe a personal interpretation to holiday rituals.

STANDARD 7
GRADE LEVEL 6-8 BENCHMARKS

7.12 Analyzes the connection between the concept of covenant/brit and the concept of the *mitzvot*.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.29, 5.6*

Suggested Examples:

- “You shall be to ME, a Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation”, Exodus 19:1-6; “all that the lord has spoken, we will do!”, Exodus 19:8, (**ספר האגדה ע' נ"ט, נעשה ונשמע, ביאליק**) , (**ורבניטשקי**); Rashi Commentary on Exodus 17:3, “At the foot of the mountain.”

Sample Learning Activities:

- Offer an explanation of a connection between *mitzvot* and what it means to be holy.
- Explain the concept of commandedness (**מצוה**).
- Discuss what it means to be obligated.
- Debate: Must the Israelites accept the *brit* in its entirety in order to be a Holy Nation?
- Write a point/counterpoint article: “We had no choice!”/“We accepted willingly!”

7.13 Compares and contrasts different sources and concepts in the Torah regarding Shabbat observance.

Suggested Examples:

- Creation, Genesis 2:1-3; the Decalogue, Exodus 20:8-11, and the Decalogue, Deuteronomy 5:12-15; observance of Shabbat within the instructions for the *mishkan*, Exodus 31:12-17; a part of the Holiness Code, Leviticus 19:3; wood gatherer, Numbers 15:32-36.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare and contrast the Decalogue in Exodus to the Decalogue in Deuteronomy in regard to Shabbat observance.
- Connect the concepts of creation (**זכר למעשה בראשית**) and redemption (**זכר ליצאת מצרים**) to Shabbat observance.
- Explore the concept of Shabbat as a sign of the covenant (**אות היא לעולם**) (Exodus 31:16-17).
- Analyze the centrality of Shabbat in the performance of *mitzvot*.
- Research how Shabbat was celebrated in different countries at different times as it relates back to the biblical injunctions.

7.14 Compares sources of holiday *mitzvot* to contemporary Jewish holiday observance.

Suggested Examples:

- Pesah, Exodus 12 and Deuteronomy 16:1-4; Shavu'ot, Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Sukkot, Leviticus 23:35 and Deuteronomy 16:13-15; Shemini Atzeret, Leviticus 23:36; Rosh

Hodesh, Numbers 28:11-15; Rosh Hashanah, Numbers 29:1-6; Yom Kippur, Numbers 29:7-11.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Note changes and similarities in practice over time, e.g., *Pesah mitzrayim* and *Pesah dorot*. Pesah in the time of the Mishnah and Pesah today.
- Find verses in the Torah that appear in the *Haggadah* and explore the changes from their original contexts.
- Explain a development of a *mitzvah* from its biblical origins to modern observance.
- Add appropriate details from biblical text for a “holiday log” or journal.

7.15 Constructs personal, historical or traditional interpretations of the significance of the *mitzvot* of *tefillin*, *mezuzah* and *tzitzit*.

Suggested Examples:

- *Tefillin*, Exodus 13:1-10 and 13:11-16 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21; *mezuzah*, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 13:13-21; *tzitzit*, Numbers 15:37-41.

Suggested Resources:

- Jeffrey H. Tigray, “*Tefillin and Mezuzot*”, *Etz Hayim Torah and Commentary*; Martin Sandberg, *Tefillin*.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Invite a *sofer* to demonstrate the work of making a *tefillin* and the writing of the *parashiyot* for *tefillin* and a *mezuzah*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze the connection of the four biblical passages placed in *tefillin* to the mitzvah of donning *tefillin*.
- Analyze the connection of two biblical passages placed in a *mezuzah* to the mitzvah of *mezuzah*.
- Draw connections between the commandment of *tzitzit* and its ultimate educational purpose.
- Abstract personal meaning of ritual from text study of *tefillin*, *mezuzah* and *tzitzit*.
- Design and make a *tallit*.
- Learn the laws of knotting a *tzitzit*.

7.16 Applies commandments relating to social justice and social responsibility to contemporary situations.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 8.26*

Suggested Examples:

- Gleanings, corners and forgotten sheaves, Leviticus 19:9, 10, 24; Deuteronomy 24:19-21; release of loans, Deuteronomy 15:1-11; relationship to vulnerable, Exodus 20:20-23, Leviticus 19:33-34, Deuteronomy 24:14-16; responsibility of unknown death,

Deuteronomy 21:1-10; return of a lost object, Deuteronomy 22:1-4; justice, Exodus 21-22, Leviticus 19:15-16, Deuteronomy 16:18-21.

Suggested Resource:

- Elliott Dorff, *Mitzvah Means Commitment*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Examine *mitzvot* for their implications to society.
- Envision *mitzvah* as how it could be accomplished in modern times.

7.17 Categorizes various different *mitzvot* given in the Torah according to their type, form or context.

Suggested Examples:

- The Decalogue, Exodus 20:1-14; religious, legal and civil *mitzvot*, Exodus 20-25; Holiness Code, Leviticus 19.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Categorize given *mitzvot*, e.g., positive and negative *mitzvot*, ritual and ethical (**בין אדם לבין אדם**), legal, *mitzvot* dependent on having the Land of Israel/(**מצוות שתלויות בארץ**).
- Create a sorting board from an amended list of taryag/613 *mitzvot*.
- Keep a *mitzvah* journal.
- Participate in a class PAC (Political Action Committee) for a specific cause, e.g., the environment, a charity, a justice issue or a Jewish education issue and find *mitzvot* to support the concept.

7.18 Evaluates the relationship of ritual to the shaping of ethical behaviors.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.14*

Suggested Examples:

- Keeping kashrut as a reminder of how we treat animals and feed the hungry, sitting in a sukkah as a reminder to provide shelter and food for the less fortunate, fulfilling *mitzvot* as a guide to deliberate and thoughtful actions.

Suggested Resources:

- Danny Siegel, *1+1 = 3 and 37 Other Mitzvah Principles to Live By*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Extrapolate ethical behavior from a chosen ritual.

7.19 Proposes personal responses to the significance of what it means to be a *bar/bat mitzvah*.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.14*

Suggested Resource:

- Jeffrey Salkin, *Putting God on the Guest List, How to Claim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Participate in a parent/student dialogue on what it means to be a *bar/bat mitzvah*.
- Write or give a *devar Torah* on what it means to become a *bar/bat mitzvah*.
- Take on a number of *mitzvot* as obligations.

STANDARD 7
GRADE LEVEL 9-12 BENCHMARKS

7.20 Traces the concept of covenant/*brit* throughout the *TaNaKH*.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.29*

Suggested Examples:

- Noah, Genesis 9; Abraham, Genesis 14, 16 and 21; Israelites, Shemot 23, 31 and 34; David II Samuel 7; Ezra 10; Nehemiah 9; Jeremiah 31.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Note development and changes.
- Reflect on comment elements of *brit*.
- Explain the relationship of *brit* to the observance of *mitzvot*.

7.21 Examines the sociological and philosophical relationship between law/*mitzvot* and narrative as suggested by biblical texts.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.31*

Suggested Examples:

- The rise of civilization, issues of good and evil, moral corruption, Genesis 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, 19; Noahide laws, Genesis 9:1-8; Numbers.

Suggested Resources:

- Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in the book of Genesis*, pp. 17-116, 164-172; Robert Cover, "The Supreme Court 1982 Term-Foreword: Nomos and Narrative", *Harvard Law Review* 97, no. 1 (1983).

Sample Learning Activities:

- Examine a narrative to see how it impacts on a law or a need for *mitzvot*.
- Show how both narratives and law act as formative foundations for different societies.
- Define the impact of law on the individual and society.
- Write an "etiological" narrative of a law.
- Compare issues studied in the U.S. Constitution and the governmental system to the Jewish law system.
- Examine the role of law and *mitzvot* when reading, for example, *Lord of the Flies* or *Catcher in the Rye*.

7.22 Compares the narrative descriptions of *mitzvot* in the Torah with their actual historical manifestations.

Suggested Examples:

- Shabbat, the Decalogue, Exodus 20:8-10 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15; *mitzvot* dependent on being in Israel, cities of refuge, Numbers 35; sabbatical and jubilee years, Exodus 23:11 and 34:21, Leviticus 25:5-11; gleanings, corners and forgotten sheaves, Leviticus 19, 9, 10, 24; centralized cult, Deuteronomy 12:14.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare and contrast the two versions of the Decalogue as recorded in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.
- Compare *mitzvot* that are dependent on entering the Land of Israel (מצוות שתלויות בארץ) with their manifestations that we know about from extra-biblical records.

7.23 Traces the evolution of dietary laws in the Torah and in its post-biblical observance.

Suggested Examples:

- Creation and vegetarianism, Genesis 1:29; Noahide laws, Genesis 9-5; dietary laws, Leviticus 11, Deuteronomy 14:1-22; prohibitions against boiling a kid in its mother's milk, Exodus 23:19, 34:26 and Deuteronomy 14:21; being distinct, Leviticus 20:22-26; narratives, Genesis 43:32, Judges 13:4-14, Daniel 1:8, 12.

Suggested Resources:

- Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*; United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism CD-ROM, "Kashrut: Sanctifying the Ordinary", Ed Greenstein, "Dietary Laws", *Etz Hayim Torah and Commentary*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explore the importance of distinctions or separations in the Torah, e.g., clean/unclean, pure/impure, sacred/profane , becoming a distinct people.
- Analyze the role of dietary laws in maintaining ethnic identity in biblical narratives.
- Examine the role of dietary laws in connection to creation and covenant and "imitation dei".
- Examine the role of *kashrut* in sanctifying daily lives.
- Research post-biblical narratives as expressions of Jewish identity, e.g., Judith 12:2, 2 Maccabees 6-7.
- Compare the laws of *kashrut* to dietary laws in ancient cultures.

7.24 Develops personal responses to questions around divine reward and punishment with regard to mitzvot.

Suggested Resources:

- Exodus 23:25-27; 32:33-34, Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 4:25-28, 5:9-10; 11:13-21; Isaiah 43:25, 44:22, 52:13-52:12, Jeremiah 5:15-17, 19:9, Amos 2, Jonah; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchot Teshuvah*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Develop a personal response to the concept of divine reward and punishment.
- Analyze passages on reward and punishment throughout the *TaNakh* for commonalities and note differences.
- Trace the development of the concept of *teshuvah* in the *TaNakh* and compare it to the rabbinic notion of *teshuvah*.

7.25 Constructs a personal meaning system that contains a conception of the relationship between God, Israel, biblical law and the ongoing development of Jewish law.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.30*

Suggested Examples:

- Revelation at *Sinai*, Exodus 19-20; Deuteronomy 30:11-14; *Tanur shel Achnai*, *Babylonian Talmud*, Baba Metzia 59b, Avot 1:1.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Can be integrated with rabbinics.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Research the development of a given law from its Torah origins through rabbinic interpretations through modern-day responsa literature.
- Write about the implications of being commanded through a system of Jewish Law.

7.26 Interprets the tension between moral and ritual mitzvot as presented by the prophets.

Suggested Examples:

- Isaiah 1:11-17 and 58; Micah 6:6-8; Amos 1:3-2.

Suggested Resource:

- Shalom Spiegel, *Amos vs. Amatziah*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Present a prophetic argument that highlights this tension.
- Write an op-ed article: “When ritual is not enough” or “Is there more to life than just being good?”
- Analyze selected haftarah portions and their matching Torah portions for this tension.
- Dramatize a confrontation between a prophet and a “high priest”.

7.27 Explores the connection between the different categories of mitzvot in the Torah.

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 20:23-19; Leviticus 18-19, 25, Deuteronomy 5:6-18, 13-16, 18-24:16, civil, criminal, religious, cultic, moral, ethical, societal, personal, communal *mitzvot*.

Suggested Resources:

- Exkursus 13 and 16, “The arrangement of Laws in Deuteronomy” and “The Laws of Deuteronomy 16”, *The JPS Torah Commentary, Deuteronomy*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Offer interpretations of the structure of legal sections.
- Suggest how to understand each law as part of a system of law.

7.28 Responds to biblical commandments that may counter modern sensibilities.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 8.20*

Suggested Examples:

- Slavery, Deuteronomy 12, 15, 18, Exodus 21, Leviticus 25; issues of sexuality, Leviticus 20:12, laws of the *Sotah*, Numbers 5:22; proscribing defeated populations, Deuteronomy 20:15-18.

Suggested Resources:

- Barry Holtz, *Textual Knowledge: Teaching the Bible in Theory and Practice*, pp. 129-149; Jeremy Cohen, *Be Fertile and Increase*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Compare biblical laws to modern conceptions of a given issue.
- Defend reasons for change or stay in law.

7.29 Compares the underlying premises of and philosophies of biblical law to American law.

Suggested Resource:

- Robert Cover, "Obligation: A Jewish Jurisprudence of Social Order", *The Journal of Law and Religion* 5, no. 1 (1987), Hamlin Law School.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Write a paper that compares and contrasts the differences between rights and obligations in the two legal systems.

7.30 Articulates a personal approach to obligation informed by biblical and rabbinic teachings.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Present a position in a class-wide symposium.

Standard 8

Students will develop a love of Torah study for its own sake and embrace it as an inspiring resource, informing their values, moral commitments and ways of experiencing the world.

PREAMBLE

תלמוד תורה כנגד כולם

“Talmud Torah Keneged Kulam”: That study of Torah ultimately leads to all other good endeavors is a fundamental principle of Jewish text study and represents a core value of the Jewish people. This standard provides teachers and students with a lens through which to explore the *TaNaKH* as a dynamic text that can profoundly influence values and a sense of moral commitments as well as foster a love of Torah study for its own sake.

The notion of “loving Torah study” is a complex one. Jewish tradition has always held, as this standard does, that the study of Torah is not merely a cognitive act, but has implications for the affective and behavioral domains too. Torah study may lead us to great insights, may stimulate our moral reflection or may simply be a powerful ongoing ritual act that situates our lives in ancient conversations. At the heart of this standard is the belief that students will see the Torah as a central place to go to help them think about their actions in the world.

STANDARD 8
GRADE LEVEL K-2 BENCHMARKS

8.1 Displays excitement, respect and anticipation for Torah study.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.1*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Give a reason why he/she enjoys Torah study.
- Assist teacher in getting classmates to prepare for Torah study.

8.2 Links specific value behaviors with biblical personalities in narrative settings.

Suggested Examples:

- **שומרי האדמה** guardians of the earth, e.g., Adam and Eve.
- **הכנסת אורחים** welcoming guests, e.g., Abraham and Sarah.
- **ביקור חולים** visiting the sick, e.g., God and Abraham.
- **צדק ומשפט** righteousness and justice, e.g., Abraham, Moses, Shifra and Puah.

8.3 Applies values into personal Jewish practice.

Suggested Example:

- Incorporate the above values as regular tasks on the job chart.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Acknowledge when a guest enters the classroom.
- Participate in acts of kindness, e.g., helping in school, calling an absent student.
- Identify school issues that can be improved.
- Treat others as one would like to be treated by others (**ואהבת לרעך כמוך**).
- Respect one's own space and the space of others.
- Include all in play activities and demonstrate "you can't say, 'you can't play'" (**אל תלבין (פני חברך**).
- Participate in a class toy drive.
- Invite and host a special guest.
- Care for the school garden.
- Take part in the class's turn for school "cleanup".

8.4 Connects the study of Torah to significant people and activities outside of formal class-time.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.3*

Suggested Examples:

- Invite parents, the principal or other guests for shared Torah study sessions. Create special time for challenging Torah-related questions. Have a *Kabbalat HaTorah* celebration.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Continue conversations about the Torah with the teacher outside of classroom time.
- Share with the class a discussion from home.
- Ask questions about the Torah lesson.
- Choose a favorite Torah portion for circle time.

STANDARD 8
GRADE LEVEL 3-5 BENCHMARKS

8.5 Express empathy for the biblical characters.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.9*

Sample Learning Activities:

- Respond to what you would do if you were Abraham? Sarah? Hagar? Joseph?
- Portray a biblical personage in a skit, dance or pantomime.
- Talk about how a biblical character might feel when...

8.6 Explores alternative outcomes to various biblical conflicts.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.5*

Suggested Examples:

- Why did Sarah laugh in Genesis 18? What might you have done differently if you were Joseph in the pit? In *Parashat Toldot*, what would you do to change the relationship between Jacob and Esau? What if you were Moshe and you decided not to hit the rock?

Sample Learning Activities:

- Use personal experiences to suggest an alternative ending or resolution.
- Raise questions about events or motivations of biblical figures.
- Role-play, dramatize.

8.7 Compares dilemmas in one's own personal life with dilemmas explored in biblical narrative.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.18*

Suggested Examples:

- Family relationships, sibling rivalry, jealousy, making choices.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Make links between events described in the biblical narrative and personal experience.
- Respond to "What might this be like today?"
- "Correspond" with a biblical figure, taking on both roles.

8.8 Compares different *TaNakh* texts that offer various approaches to teacher-selected moral dilemmas.

Suggested Example:

- Ruth versus *Parashat Mishpatim* regarding Jewish/Israelite relationships with non-Jews/Moabites.

8.9 Interprets a *TaNaKH* text in a way that is specifically personally meaningful.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.18*

Suggested Example:

- לשמרה ולעבדה in Genesis 1 as a connection to environmental activism.

8.10 Analyzes moral dilemmas as complex, sometimes irresolvable questions.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.5*

Sample Learning Activity:

- Evaluate God's response to evil in the Flood story and suggest alternate ways God could have responded.

8.11 Suggests titles for biblical passages that capture their modern moral equivalents.

Suggested Examples:

- "Is it okay to hit a bully?" for Moses and the Egyptian, Exodus 2; "You can't get angry if you're a leader" for the Golden Calf, Exodus 32.

8.12 Articulates the idea that Torah study is concerned with moral questions.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.6*

Sample Learning Activity:

- Create with a big idea for advocating Torah study.

8.13 Participates in *Torah lishmah* activities.

Suggested Examples:

- Take part in a *Kabbalat Shabbat* activity with *Parashat HaShavua* study. Invite parents to participate with students in a *tikkun leil Shavuot*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Illustrate a favorite passage or verse.
- Retell a bible story or *parashah* at home.
- Create a study guide for others to use.

STANDARD 8
GRADE LEVEL 6-8 BENCHMARKS

8.14 Identifies and evaluates dilemmas in teacher-identified texts.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis (integrity, justice, loyalty, fairness), Exodus (treatment of others, moral courage), Judges (charismatic leadership, morality in warfare), I Samuel (limitations of friendship, succession and warfare), II Samuel, Kings (abuse of power and authority, moral corruption and violence), Ruth (family loyalty and responsibility), Esther (women's issues, Jewish identity, standing up for what you believe, restoring social order, responsibility in victory), Jonah (self-righteousness, responsibility, attitudes of Jews toward Gentiles).

Sample Learning Activities:

- Connect moral dilemmas in a current event to those found in biblical texts.
- Articulate the conflicts and ambiguities in biblical dilemmas.

8.15 Analyzes and evaluates the *TaNaKH's* internal resolutions of its conflicts and moral dilemmas.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis: Cain and Abel; punishment in the flood generation; Tower of Babel; Abraham and Lot; Sodom, Sarah and Hagar; Rebecca, Jacob and Esau; Jacob and Laban; Joseph and his brothers.
- Exodus: Bat-Pharaoh and the midwives, Moses and the Egyptian.
- Numbers: Miriam and Moses; Pinches, Omri and Zimri.
- I Samuel: Samuel, Saul and Agag.
- II Samuel: David and Bathsheba.
- I Kings: Ahab, Jezebel and Navot.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Do a dramatic reading of the biblical text that conveys a personal position.
- Write a journal entry in the voice of a biblical character.
- Evaluate the acts of biblical characters.
- Create a "scruples" game.
- Participate in a trial of a personality or a situation.
- Debate various sides of a conflict or situation.

8.16 Articulates the universal aspects of specific themes and ideas in the Torah.

Suggested Examples:

- Sibling rivalry (Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Joseph and his brothers, Rachel and Leah); jealousy (Hagar and Sarah); compassion and friendship (David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi); communal responsibility (**כי ימוך אחיך**) – taking care of the poor and disenfranchised; the need for law and precedents (Revelation, the Decalogue, *Mishpatim*, Zelophehad's daughters); rebellion (Israelites, Korach); human strengths and

foibles; good and evil; free will (Adam); covenant and obligation; reward and punishment; feminism, moral courage (midwives, Pharaoh's daughter).

Sample Learning Activities:

- Share examples from the present in discussing the text.
- Create a newspaper with articles reflecting a theme in the modern idiom.
- Write or act in a parable based on a theme of the text.
- Given a theme or verse from the text, design an collage reflecting the theme.

8.17 Applies key phrases and quotes drawn from biblical texts to real life situations in which moral questions are raised.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 6.21*

Suggested Examples:

- In the image of God (Gen. 1:27) (בצלם אלוהים)
- Am I brother's keeper? (Gen. 4:9) (השומר אחי אנכי)
- Honor your father and mother. (Exod. 20:12) (כבד את אביך ואת אמך)
- You shall not insult the deaf. (Lev. 9:14) (לא תקלל חרש)
- Do not stand upon your fellow's blood. (Lev 19:15) (לא תעמוד על דם רעך)
- Love your fellow as yourself. (Lev. 19:17) (ואהבת לרעך כמוך)
- For you were strangers in a strange land. (Lev. 19:34) (כי גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים)
- Justice, justice you shall pursue. (Deut. 16:20) (צדק צדק תרדוף)
- Do justice, love goodness and walk humbly with God...(Micah 6:8) (כי אם עשות משפט) (ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת עם אלהיך)

Sample Learning Activities:

- Write a parable or *d'var Torah* based on a phrase or verse.
- Design a sign and/or illustration with a chosen phrase.
- Write a song based on a phrase.
- Design the ideal society in response to: What would a society, community or our school look like if this phrase served as a cornerstone of its vision?

8.18 Examines legal passages in the Torah for their ethical and moral implications.

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 21:1-14, the Decalogue; Exodus 21-25, *Parashat Mishpatim*, Leviticus 11, dietary laws; Deuteronomy 22:1-3, "returning of a lost object"; Deuteronomy 24:17-18, laws concerning the stranger, widow and orphan; Deuteronomy 24:19-22, laws of leaving sheaves and corners of the field for the indigent and disenfranchised.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze the rationale of a law when it was originally applied and both how and why its application may have evolved over time.
- Explore how the law may appear in Judaism today.
- Examine the rationale of a law when started.

8.19 Participates in communal activities around Torah lishmah.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Prepare a *d'var Torah* for a *Kabbalat Shabbat* program or for a prayer service.
- Present and teach a biblical passage in a parent/student *bar* and *bat mitzvah* program or an evening of learning.

8.20 Articulates various perspectives on modern moral issues using either teacher or student-identified biblical texts.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 3.3, 4.25, 7.28*

Suggested Examples:

- Equality of humankind; revenge and justice; war and the pursuit of peace; morality in warfare; abuse of power and moral corruption; family loyalty and conflicts; deceit, personal integrity and honesty; attitudes of Jews toward others; justice and mercy; meaningful laws; verbal and physical violence; creating a just society reward and punishment.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Abstract major moral themes from biblical contexts.
- Raise questions about the “morality” of a narrative or a law in the light of the Torah’s own truths and/or in light of a personal ethical view.
- Relate current news or a current topic to Torah study.
- Argue dilemmas from a personal perspective.
- Take and state a position in “four corners”.
- Do investigative reporting and an “interview”.

8.21 Formulates contemporary scenarios which include modern versions of biblical characters.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.25*

Sample Learning Activity:

- Role-play two brothers jockeying for position over their parents’ inheritance.

STANDARD 8
GRADE LEVEL 9-12 BENCHMARKS

8.22 Evaluates legal passages in the Torah within their historical/biblical context for their ethical and moral implications.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.30, 6.24, 7.18*

Suggested Examples:

- Lex talionis (an eye for an eye), laws of slavery, levirate marriage, sacrifices, civil and criminal laws, courts and witnesses, laws of warfare.

Suggested Resource:

- Moshe Greenberg, "The Biblical Grounding of Human Value"

Sample Learning Activities:

- Explain and analyze Pentateuchal law within its historical/biblical context.
- Trace the development and changes in law (can be integrated within a rabbinics unit).
- Compare a law to an ancient and Near Eastern law. (See Standard 2)

8.23 Discerns legal practices from various narratives.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 23:10, Abraham and Ephron, land purchase; Genesis 32:33, Jacob's struggle, ban on eating the thigh tendon; Genesis 38, Judah and Tamar, levirate marriage; Jeremiah 32:10-17, Jeremiah and Hanamiel, deed of purchase.

Suggested Resource:

- Ed Greenstein, "Dietary Laws", *Etz Hayim Torah and Commentary*; Norman Lamm, *Jewish Ethics and Practice*.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Present possible interpretations of the symbolism of the law.
- Adduce the meaning of the significance of the law from its narrative.

8.24 Uses a variety of methods for responding to ethically problematic narratives and laws.

Suggested Examples:

- Genesis 27, Jacob's deception of Isaac; Genesis 34, rape of Dina and revenge of Simon and Levi; Numbers 5:11-29, Laws of the *Sotah*; Deuteronomy 20:17, laws of *herem* (destroying the inhabitants of the land).

Suggested Resources:

- Moshe Greenberg, "Moral Issues in the Bible", lecture on video, JTS; Barry Holtz, *Textual Knowledge: Teaching Bible in Theory and Practice*, pp. 129-149.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Evaluate a selection for its timelessness or its place within a historical context.
- Refer to commentaries to compare various interpretations.
- Recognize that the Torah presents unanswered and unanswerable questions.

8.25 Explains how traditional and modern biblical commentators develop biblical issues of morality.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.17*

Suggested Examples:

- Moshe Greenberg, "On Teaching the Bible in Religious Schools", *Jewish Education*, 29, no. 3 (1959); 45-33; Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in the Book of Genesis*, pp. 53-59.

Sample Learning Activity:

- Research commentaries on an issue of morality.
- Write an editorial on a biblical issue.

8.26 Identifies issues of social justice in the *TaNaKH* and applies its messages.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 4.30, 7.16*

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus, slavery; Leviticus 19, *Parashat Kedoshim*; Deuteronomy 16:1-12, tithing and caring for the poor, Isaiah 2:1-4, call for peace; Isaiah 58:2-7, call to correct societal ills; Jeremiah 8:10-12, acting falsely; Jeremiah 9:23, call for kindness, justice and equality; Amos 4:1-3 and 5:12-13, corrupt courts and human disregard; Amos 5:21-25, call for righteousness and justice.

Curricular Suggestion:

- Can be integrated with a social-studies elective, e.g., poverty in America, emerging nations.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze current-events issues through the lens of a Torah text.
- Debate the role of ritual in fostering moral and ethical behavior.
- Identify the theme of the religious imperative and the theme of the need for freedom, law, land and self-governance throughout the biblical narrative.
- Compare and contrast the other cultures and societies' self-definitions to emergent Israelite society.
- Interview a social activist on a particular social; initiates or joins a social-action committee.

8.27 Analyzes the potential inspirational impact of biblical poems, psalms and proverbs on the reader.

Suggested Examples:

- Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 28-32, Judges 4, Psalms 14, 23, 34, 117, 150, 126.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Analyze a biblical poem using modern literary techniques.
- Based on the student's knowledge of *Tehillim*, write a personal psalm.
- Write poetic interpretations of biblical events in the voice of biblical characters in a particular setting.

8.28 Identifies biblical influences and themes in music, literature and art.

➔ *Benchmark Genius: 2.13, 2.30, 4.23*

Suggested Example:

- Integrate art into a text study.

Suggested Resources:

- Visuals: www.ratnermuseum.com, <http://artbible.info>, www.geocities.com/Venna/Choir/4792/michel.html (on Moses).
- Music: Salamone Rossi, *Songs of Solomon: Musical and Technical Quintessence*, New York Baroque, Eric Milenes, Director; Handel, *Shaul*, Alessandro Scarlatti, *Ishmael*, Newport Classic, Providence, Rudolph Palmer, Conductor; Arnold Schoenberg, *Moses and Aaron*; Carl Nielsen, *Symphony No. 3: Order and Chaos*; 2001: A Space Odyssey Soundtrack (creation).
- Literature: "The Real Hero", "David, King of Israel, is Alive: Thou Art the Man" and many other poems by Yehuda Amichai.

8.29 Articulates own personal value and application of Torah lishmah.

Sample Learning Activities:

- Write a journal response to Deuteronomy 30:11-14 ("It is not in the heavens...").
- Participate and teach at a *tikkun leil Shavu'ot*.