

8th Grade English
(7th graders entering 8th grade)

Please read BOTH of the following books prior to the start of school and bring your project and essay to class on the first or second day of school (printed, final draft from, ready to hand in). These will be used for class discussion and an assessment of your writing skills.

Be sure to have completely read (cover to cover) the selected books—in their original, full version (no abridged or “junior” editions) and use NO OUTSIDE SOURCES for your assignments. Be prepared to take a short comprehension test over each novel, so if you read early in the summer, take notes to refresh what you read.

(1) Read ***Tom Sawyer*** by Mark Twain

Project: Create a **time capsule** with important objects from the book. Creativity must reflect your reading! Choose an appropriate container (tube or box – not just a grocery bag) and then fill it with at least **SEVEN well-chosen objects** that would be near and dear to Tom’s heart. The seven objects cannot all be from the same portion of the book (ie. paintbrush, white paint, tin pail, and white marble all from Chapter 2) – choose ONE object from each section of the book: (1) Chapters 1-5, (2) Chapters 6-10, (3) Chapters 11-15, (4) Chapters 16-20, (5) Chapters 21-25, (6) Chapters 26-30, and (7) Chapters 31-35. The objects must be tangible (a physical item, not just a description). You must also include a **typed, written explanation of each item and its importance** to Tom, including a direct quote from the book with page number. Prepare to share the time capsule with the class. Your grade will be based on the time capsule, its contents, and your written explanation.

Example from *Journey to the Center of the Earth*: Chapters 31-35: Cumulus clouds (represented by cotton balls). In Chapter 35, Axel notices clouds on the horizon. He describes them as “great bales of cotton piled up in picturesque disorder” (118). They are the warning signs of a huge storm that nearly destroys the raft and carries them across the underground sea.

(2) Read ***The Hiding Place*** by Corrie ten Boom

Choose THREE of the listed discussion prompts and write a developed paragraph (5-7 sentences) for each. Type your paragraphs on one double-spaced document (12-pt font). Be sure to give specific examples from the book not vague generalities.

1. Discuss how Father was such an important moral example in the lives of his children by citing specific examples to prove this point.
2. Why does Corrie never marry (be sure to cite at least two reasons) and what are the consequences of this decision in her life?
3. Why do the ten Booms choose to hide Jews who are fleeing the Nazis? What are the consequences, both good and bad? Why can this be said to be part of God’s plan?
4. Analyze how Corrie’s religious faith gave her strength not just when she was in prison, but also at other tragic or stressful times in her life.
5. How does Corrie’s story inspire you? Be sure to give specific examples.

8th Grade Honors English

In addition to the two books and projects listed for English 8, **HONORS English 8** students will also read

(3) **Night** by Elie Wiesel

You need to practice annotating your books, that is – writing notes in the margins of the pages to highlight essential information, ask discussion questions, and identify important quotes. If you want to read to remember, you should read with a pencil in your hand.

In this book, I want you to place **10 Post-It notes** (regular 3x3 size) next to 10 different quotes which you have underlined and want to discuss in class. Spread them throughout the book (not all in one section). On the note, write the page number and write a 2-3 sentence response to the quote which you have identified as important.

*Show that you are a critical reader – that you can “read between the lines of the text” and think about the meaning of the text in terms of a larger or universal significance. You may also create your own meaning through personal connections and references to other text. Thoughtful questions are ideal, and be sure to explore different interpretations. Your thoughts are valid – don’t go to outside sources for the “right answer.” Interact with the text as you question, agree, disagree, or appreciate.

LIMITED READER: perfunctory responses	LITERAL READER: simple, factual responses	THOUGHTFUL READER: somewhat detailed responses	CRITICAL READER: detailed, elaborate responses
1	2	3	4
You find the text confusing, but don't attempt to figure it out.	You accept the text literally without thinking of different possibilities in meaning.	You make connections to your own past experiences, feelings, or knowledge, but don't explain in enough detail.	You can “read between the lines” of the text.
You don't change your ideas about the text after re-reading it.	You are reluctant to change your ideas about the text, even after re-reading it.	You rarely change your ideas about the text even after you re-read it.	You think about the meaning of the text in terms of a larger or universal significance, as aspect of self or life in general.
You make few or no connections to the text and your ideas lack development.	You don't reach beyond the obvious to make connections to the text; you make few connections, which lack sufficient detail.	You may agree or disagree with ideas in the text, but you don't thoroughly explain or support your opinions.	You create your own meaning through personal connections and references to other texts.
	You are sometimes confused by unclear or difficult sections of the text.	You ask simple questions about the text.	You consider different interpretations as you read.
		You think of some unusual responses but stay mostly with more obvious meaning of the text.	You experiment with different ideas or think of original or unpredictable responses.
			You carry on an ongoing dialogue with the writer; you question, agree, disagree, appreciate, or object.

During the school year the following works will be required reading:

- *The Call of the Wild* – Jack London
 - *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – No Fear Shakespeare
 - *Mythology* – Edith Hamilton
- HONORS:** *The Hobbit* – J.R.R. Tolkien