

St. Joseph's Catholic School

Grades 6-8

2025 Summer Reading Assignments

For the 2025 summer, read **two books: one fiction book and one nonfiction book**.

Step 1: Choose your books from the attached list. Books can be purchased or checked out from a local library.

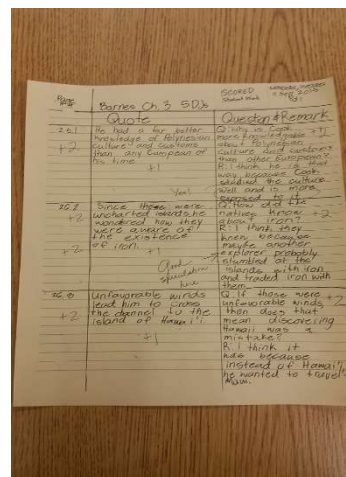
Step 2: As you read, complete the tasks detailed below. Tasks will be due **on the 2nd day of school in August**.

TASK 1: Dialectical Journal Assignment (fiction book)

A dialectical journal is a written conversation with yourself about a piece of literature that encourages the habit of reflective questioning. You will use a **double-entry format** to examine details of a passage and synthesize your understanding of the text.

Questions:

1. **How many entries do I need?** At least 2 entries per chapter; if your book is more than 10 chapters, you will need at least 20 entries total (maybe one per chapter).
2. **How do I create the journal and choose passages?**
You will need to use lined paper to complete your entries. Your entries should be neat and orderly. See the sample below.

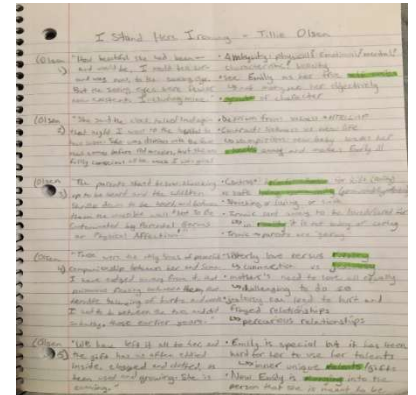


Quote/passage from the book	Page Number	Commentary/Analysis/Questions
On the left side, you will write your chosen quote/lines from the book	Here you will write the page number from the book	On the right side, you will write your comments, thoughts, analysis or questions about the quote you chose.

3. How do I choose lines or quotes from the novel:

Choose quotes that:

- seem important to you or something strikes you as odd, or you agree or disagree with something that is said or an action of a character.
- connect to something else you have read or seen
- provide details about a character: character actions, words or what others or the narrator says about the character
- Show a pattern (motif of recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols, descriptions, details, etc.).
- provide details about the setting
- use figurative language effectively: simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery
- provide details about the plot



Sample Journal Entries (entries are from different books)

Quote from the book The book says...	Page number	Comments/Analysis/Reflection/Connection I say... (write your thoughts)
IMAGERY "-they carried like freight trains; they carried it on their backs and shoulders and for all the ambiguities of Vietnam, all the mysteries and unknowns, there was at least the single abiding certainty that they would never be at a loss for things to carry."	2	O'Brien chooses to end the first section of the novel with this sentence. He provides excellent visual details of what each soldier in Vietnam would carry for day-to-day fighting. He makes you feel the physical weight of what soldiers have to carry for simple survival.
SETTING "There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go....nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: Maycomb Great County had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself."	11	Apparently, Maycomb is also a very slow, sleepy town that is pretty isolated from everything else. I wonder why they see the world this way - maybe people don't travel because of the depression or because that's just not what people did.
CHARACTERIZATION "My own house was an eye-sore, but it was a small eye-sore and it had been overlooked, so I had a view of the water, a partial view of my neighbor's lawn and the consoling proximity of millionaires - all for eighty dollars a month"	21	Nick is new to New York, and living by millionaires is a great start to becoming a well-known man. However this line shows how he is different from his new neighbors. They have money and he does not.

Task 2: Nonfiction book

Short Response Questions

As you read your nonfiction book, notate important facts or details then answer the following questions on loose leaf paper. Be ready to turn it in **on the 2nd day of school** to your ELA teacher.

Directions: Respond using at least 5-11 sentences and follow the format : topic sentence, supporting details/text evidence, closing sentence.

Heading

Book title

Author

Your answers to these four questions.

1. What makes this book unique? Explain this uniqueness. Provide examples from the book to support your response.
2. In what ways can the information in the book be applied to your life? Be specific by choosing a specific element from the text as well as a specific aspect of your life.
3. What is the author's overall purpose/message in the book? Provide text evidence to support your response.
4. What vivid images stand out? What effect do these images have on you and how do they help you understand the writer's message or purpose?

Grade 8 only (respond to 1-4 and these questions)

5. How does the author establish his/her credibility? Explain specific ways the author presents himself/herself as a trustworthy and qualified messenger?
6. How does the writer use rhetorical or literary devices? Provide examples of at least **three devices** used in the book and explain their effect.
 - a. Suggested devices: analogy, allusions, metaphor, personification, repetition, parallelism, irony

Rubrics

Dialectical Journal

Dialectical Journal Rubric

Criteria	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point
Number of Entries	20 complete entries submitted, all meeting assignment requirements	15-19 entries submitted, minor inconsistencies	Fewer than 15 entries or significant gaps in completion
Quote Selection	Quotes are exceptionally insightful and demonstrate a desire to want to understand the text deeply.	Quotes are relevant but may lack depth or connection	Quotes are generic, poorly chosen or irrelevant
Commentary Quality	Thoughtful, in-depth commentary that shows critical thinking, makes meaningful connections, and demonstrates sophisticated text interpretation	Commentary provides some insight and student attempts to connect with the text , but lacks depth	Commentary is minimal, shows little engagement with the text
Mechanics and Formatting	Perfectly formatted, error-free, with consistent and professional presentation	Minor formatting or mechanical errors that do not significantly impede understanding	Significant formatting or mechanical errors that distract from content

Scoring Guide:

- 10-12 Points: Exceptional (94, 97, 100)
- 7-9 Points: Proficient (85, 89, 93)
- 5-7 Points: Developing (76,80,84)
- Below 5 Points: Needs Improvement 75

Short Response Question Rubric

Criteria	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point
Length Requirement	Meets or exceeds the specified length requirement with a comprehensive response	Meets most of the length requirement with a mostly complete response	Falls significantly short of the length requirement or provides minimal information
Insight and Depth	Demonstrates exceptional critical thinking with sophisticated, nuanced analysis of the topic	Shows clear understanding with some depth of thought and analysis	Provides surface-level response with limited or unclear analysis
Textual Evidence	Incorporates multiple relevant, precise textual citations that strongly support the response	Uses some appropriate textual evidence with partial explanation	Includes minimal or irrelevant textual evidence, or fails to cite sources
Grammar and Mechanics	Mostly free of major grammatical errors	Contains minimal grammatical errors that do not interfere with understanding	Demonstrates significant grammatical errors that impede comprehension
Relevance to Prompt	Directly and thoroughly addresses all aspects of the prompt with clear, focused reasoning	Addresses most of the prompt with some deviation from the main focus	Minimally addresses the prompt or goes off-topic

Scoring Guide:

- **Total Points Possible:** 15
- **13-15 Points:** Exceeding Standards (94, 97, 100)
- **10-12 Points:** Meeting Standards (85, 89, 93)
- **0-9 Points:** Approaching Standards (80)

Incoming Grade 8 - FICTION

Author	Title	Lexile	AR level
Bradbury, Ray	<i>The Martian Chronicles: Something Wicked This Way Comes</i>	740	6.2
Burg, Ann	<i>All the Broken Pieces</i>	680	4.1
Christie, Agatha	<i>And Then There Were None</i>	570	5.7
Christie, Agatha	<i>Murder on the Orient Express</i>	640	6.2
Cisneros, Sandra	<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	870	4.5
Crew, Linda	<i>Children of the River</i>	700	5.6
Frank, Ann	<i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i>	1080	6.5
Frank, Pat	<i>Alas, Babylon</i>	870	6.1
Gratz, Allen	<i>Refugee</i>	800	5.3
Hinton, S.E	<i>The Outsiders</i>	750	4.7
Knowles, John	<i>A Separate Peace</i>	1110	6.9
Lee, Harper	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	870	
Orwell, George	<i>1984</i>	1090	8.9
Orwell, George	<i>Animal Farm</i>	1170	7.3
Paulsen, Gary	<i>Northwind</i>		6.2
Steinbeck, John	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	680	
White, T. H	<i>The Once and Future King</i>	1080	7.4
Yolen, Jane	<i>The Devil's Arithmetic</i>	730	4.6

NONFICTION

Author	Title	Lexile	AR level
Fleischman, Sid	<i>Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini</i>	940	6.6
Fleming, Candace	<i>Enigma Girls: How Ten Teenagers Broke Ciphers, Kept Secrets, and Helped Win World War II</i>	870	
Hale, Nathan	<i>Treaties, Trenches, Mud and Blood</i>	680	3.8
Jiang, Ji-Li	<i>Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution</i>	780	5
Jimenez, Francisco	<i>The Circuit: Stories from the life of a Migrant Child</i>	880	4.1-6.0
Macaulay, David	<i>The Way Things Work</i>	1180	
Marrin, Albert	<i>Black Gold: The Story of Oil in Our Lives</i>	930	6.6
Ogle, Rex	<i>Free Lunch</i>	540	3.7
Paulsen, Gary	<i>Woodsong</i>	1030	
Rockliff, Mara	<i>Get Real: What Kind of World are you Buying</i>	890	3.8
Soto, Gary	<i>A Summer Life</i>	990	
Sutcliffe, Jane	<i>The White House is Burning</i>	960	
Swanson, James R	<i>Chasing Lincoln's Killer</i>	980	6
Warren, Andrea	<i>Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Story</i>	960	6.1

Zuckerman, Gregory	Rising Above, How 11 Athletes Overcame Challenges in Their Youth to Become Stars	1010	
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Incoming Grade 7 FICTION			
Author	Title	Lexile	AR level
Bloor, Edward	<i>Tangarine</i>	680	4.3
Boyne, John	The Boy in the Striped Pajamas	1000	5.8
Christie, Agatha	<i>And Then There Were None</i>	570	5.7
Christie, Agatha	<i>Murder on the Orient Express</i>	640	6.2
Cisneros, Sandra	<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	870	4.5
Curtis, Christopher Paul	The Watsons Go to Birmingham	920	5
Fleischmann, Paul	<i>Seedfolks</i>	710	4.3
Halse, Laurie Anderson	<i>Rebellion 1776</i>	660	4.6
Hesse, Karen	<i>Out of the Dust</i>		5.3
Munoz Ryan, Pam	<i>Esperanza Rising</i>	750	5.3
Peacock, Carol Antoniette	<i>Red Thread Sisters</i>	700	4.2
Ranskin, Ellen	<i>Westing Game</i>	750	8
Rawls, Wilson	<i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>	700	4.9
Stewart, Trenton Lee	<i>The Mysterious Benedict Society</i>	890	5.6
NONFICTION			
Author	Title	Lexile	AR level
Fleischman, Sid	<i>Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini</i>	940	6.6
Fleming, Candace	<i>Enigma Girls: How Ten Teenagers Broke Ciphers, Kept Secrets, and Helped Win World War II</i>	870	
Hale, Nathan	<i>Treaties, Trenches, Mud and Blood</i>	680	3.8
Jiang, Ji-Li	<i>Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution</i>	780	5
Jimenez, Francisco	<i>The Circuit: Stories from the life of a Migrant Child</i>	880	4.1-6.0
Macaulay, David	<i>The Way Things Work</i>	1180	
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Paulsen, Gary	<i>Woodsong</i>	1030	
Rockliff, Mara	<i>Get Real: What Kind of World are you Buying</i>	890	3.8
Soto, Gary	<i>A Summer Life</i>	990	
Sutcliffe, Jane	<i>The White House is Burning</i>	960	
Swanson, James R	<i>Chasing Lincoln's Killer</i>	980	6
Warren, Andrea	<i>Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Story</i>	960	6.1

Zuckerman, Gregory	<i>Rising Above, How 11 Athletes Overcame Challenges in Their Youth to Become Stars</i>	1010	
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Incoming Grade 6 FICTION			
Author	Title	Lexile	AR level
Armstrong, William	Sounder	900	5.3
Creech, Sharon	Walk Two Moons	770	4.9
Curtis, Christopher Paul	Bud not Buddy	950	5
Gipson, Fred	Old Yeller	910	5
London, Jack	The Call of the Wild	1120	8
Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds	Shiloh	890	4.4
Philbrick, Rodman	Freak the Mighty	930	5.5
Rawls, Wilson	Where the Red Fern Grows	700	4.9
Smith, Betty	A Tree Grows in Brooklyn	810	4.8
Smith, Roland	Peak	760	5
Spinelli, Jerry	Maniac Magee	800	4.7
Stead, Rebecca	When You Reach Me?	750	4.5
Stevensen, Robert Louis	Treasure Island	910-1100	5.6-8.3
Taylor, Mildred	Roll of Thunder Hear my Cry	920	5.7
Wolk, Lauren	Wolf Hollow	800	4.9
NONFICTION			
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Fleischman, Sid	Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini	940	6.6
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Macaulay, David	The Way Things Work	1180	

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