8th Grade Summer Reading

Welcome to 8th grade!

Students who are taking on-level ELA will read the following texts:
- *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton
- Various articles found at www.sartiasummerreading.weebly.com

Students taking Pre-AP ELA will read:
- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- *How to Read Literature like a Professor for Kids* by Thomas C. Foster (There is an adult version of this book, so be sure to get the one FOR KIDS.)

You will be assessed over the summer reading within the first three weeks of school. Choosing not to read will affect your grade, so be sure to read.

For all texts, we encourage you to annotate—to highlight or underline these passages AND to make some kind of note as to why you underlined them. The reading is required, but the annotating and notes are not; however, you will be able to use your notes for all assessments.

**On-Level Students**

*The Outsiders*
As you closely read, consider the following topics and questions to respond to in your annotations.
- **Theme**—Life’s circumstances do not define who a person is unless s/he allows them to.
- **Theme**—People of different backgrounds share more similarities than what meets the eye.
- **Symbolism**—hair, sunrise/sunsets, Gone with the Wind
- **Character**—Ponyboy’s self-discovery and growth
- **Character**—Johnny’s self-worth and moral compass
- **Characters**—Sodapop and Darrel’s relationship with Ponyboy
- **Character**—Dally is/is not a hero.
- **Character**—Cherry Valance’s ability to connect and divide the Greasers and Socs
- **Character**—Bob and Randy’s differing moral compasses

**Articles**
For each article, make connections back to The Outsiders and to your own life. You can print out the articles and annotate them, or you can keep a dialectical journal (the left column for quotes and the right column for commentary).

**Pre-AP Students**

*How to Read Literature like a Professor*
While you read, make connections to texts that you’ve already studied in school. How does what the author describe bring more meaning to the following texts: *Freak the Mighty*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963*, *The Hobbit*, *Full Tilt*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Where the Red Fern Grows*. Consider other books that you’ve read and movies and TV shows that you’ve watched.

*The Giver*
The essential question for this novel is—
Is Jonas’s community a utopia, a false utopia, or a dystopia?

Terms

**Utopia** is a name for an ideal community, taken from the title of a book written in 1516 by Sir Thomas More describing a fictional island in the Atlantic Ocean that appeared to have a perfect social system. The term has been used to describe both intentional communities that attempted to create an ideal society, and fictional societies portrayed in literature.

The word comes from Greek: ou-, “not”, and topos-, "place", indicating that More did not consider such an ideal place to be realistically possible. Despite this, most modern usage of the term "Utopia" assumes the meaning of a place of perfection rather than nonexistence. It is worth noting that what is considered utopian is subjective to its members. Not all communities that are considered utopian will look “perfect” to an outside observer. However, as long as there is a choice for all its members to live there, shared resources, and a relatively good life, the community is considered a utopia according to modern standards.

**A dystopia** (from the Greek dys-, bad, and topos-) is the vision of a society that is the opposite of utopia. A dystopian society is a state in which the conditions of life are miserable, characterized by human misery, poverty, oppression, violence, disease, and/or pollution.

Some academic circles distinguish between **false utopia** and dystopia. As in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a dystopia does not pretend to be utopian, while a false utopia appears to be utopian or was intended to be so, but a fatal flaw or other factor has destroyed or twisted the intended utopian world or concept (“Dystopia”).

Assignment #1

While you are reading, make note of the good qualities (utopian) and the bad qualities (dystopian) with brief commentaries as to why they are good or bad. Consider if the society is a good place (utopia), a bad place (dystopia), or a bad place that appears to be a good place (false utopia).

Assignment #2

While you are reading, make connections to *How to Read Literature like a Professor for Kids*. How does reading *HTRLLAP* help you to better understand what Lowry is doing in *The Giver*? Make connections to specific chapters and examples.

We hope you enjoy the books. Please access our website [www.sartariasummerreading.weebly.com](http://www.sartariasummerreading.weebly.com) to learn more about the books. There are blogs on the site that you are free to write on to ask questions, to post thoughts, and to communicate with each other and with your future teachers.

Have a great summer!!

Your eighth grade ELA teachers,

Ms. Chen
Mrs. Davenport