

ENGLISH 8 Summer Reading Information 2023-2024

Summer reading is your first taste of what to expect from English class!

Through summer reading, your English teachers would like:

- to encourage thoughtful book selection
- to help you grow your reading and critical thinking skills
- to encourage you to enjoy the experience of reading
- to introduce our course theme: *the individual and society*

English 8 focuses on the theme of the individual within a society. What are the principles of a society? How do we as individuals thrive within the context of the greater society? Our all-class read is a book that will bring together the themes of 6th grade (transition) and 7th grade (identity) as we watch a character figure out who he is as he transitions into the new “society” of high school.

Complete these two things:

1. **All-class reading:** Read and write a multi-paragraph essay on *Curveball* by Jordan Sonnenblick. The essay should be about 1 – 2 pages in length if typed and double-spaced. We will be using *Curveball* to start the year.
2. **Free choice reading:** Read and make a video responding to your free choice reading. What you read should be the equivalent substance of reading a novel, but it may be a novel, a graphic novel, a biography, a non-fiction book, multiple short stories, multiple issues of a magazine, multiple articles on a certain topic of interest, etc.

If you are looking for ideas for reading material, please feel free to browse the [recommended middle school resource lists](#).

Submission and Grading:

You should complete your work over the summer and are encouraged to turn it in as soon as you finish.

Email or share your completed work to Mrs. Laura Riker: lriker@mamail.net

You will have the first few days at school to get clarifications or help with technology if needed.

Please submit your work by the end of the first week of school.

- If you type your written responses in a Google Doc, you can share the doc or email it as an attachment.
- If you choose to handwrite your essay, you should take a photo and email it.
- Your video can be uploaded into your Google Drive and shared with lriker@mamail.net.

In summer reading, we want to see *your* best work and hear *your* best ideas. This work will count towards the first trimester, roughly equivalent to a quiz grade, and if you give your best personal effort you will be successful. Your writing needs to be in your own words, and ideas and should be based on your own reading. Outside sources of any type (including AI-assisted writing such as ChatGPT) are not appropriate for this assignment.

See important instructions on the following page.

Curveball – Essay Instructions:

Respond to one (1) prompt for your essay so your instructor can see how well you can write a developed response on a focused concept using multiple paragraphs. (The essay should be about 1 – 2 pages in length if typed and double-spaced.) Make sure you use the content of the book to support your ideas. *This essay should give your English teacher a sense for you as a writer and show you have read the book.*

Identity –Discuss Peter’s sense of identity as the novel progresses.

Consider questions such as: How did he define himself prior to his injury? What struggles does he have regarding his various identities? How does he define himself by the end of his 9th grade year?

Transition –Discuss the transitions Peter has to go through over the course of the novel.

Consider questions such as: What transitions does he have to make? What does he do to cope with them? What is their impact on him?

Relationships –Discuss a significant relationship between two characters in the book.

Consider questions such as: What creates a connection between the two characters? What are the main qualities of the relationship? How does the relationship go through challenges and changes?

Personal connection – Discuss ways in which you relate to this novel.

Consider questions such as: What content of the story (such as personal experiences, hobbies, relationships, plans for high school, etc.) can you relate to personally? Why? How?

Free Choice Reading – Video Instructions:

Record a short (approx. 2 – 5 minutes), informal video of you responding to what you have read.

Think of this as a casual reading conference with your teacher that just happens to be recorded. You should respond to each of the prompts listed below. You may read over them ahead of time, but you should NOT rehearse or write out responses. This video will not be posted or shared anywhere, and it’s okay if you mis-speak or have some long pauses.

You can use an iPhone, iPad, or computer to complete this part, and having a parent or older sibling ask you the questions can make it feel more natural. If you are unable to complete this part due to technology issues, then you may conference in person with your teacher when we return to school instead.

You MUST address the numbered prompts:

1. Introduce yourself.
2. What did you choose to read, and how did you select it?
3. Tell me about 1 or 2 characters or people featured in what you read. Who are they, and what do you think of them?
4. What is your overall reaction to what you read?
5. Tell me about favorite parts or favorite things you learned. Why do you like these particular things?

You MAY also address the starred prompts:

- * Was this an easy or a hard read for you? How do you know?
- * How well did you relate to this story or particular content?
- * To whom would you recommend this reading and why?