

# 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Honors

## Summer Project

Is there anything better than sitting in the sunshine, sipping ice-cold lemonade, and escaping into a good book? It sounds wonderful, right? Over the next three months, you will explore a wide-range of texts for your summer project. You will be reading 4 books, which averages out to about a book every 3-4 weeks. Sound overwhelming? It's not, I promise. You will have complete autonomy over the books you select. I provide the genre; you select the text.

Each text needs to be **grade-level equivalent and over 150 pages**. We are reading to learn, after all.

For each book you read, you need to complete 10 journal responses about the text. The journal questions are listed later in this packet.

You will select a book from each of the following genres:

- Classical
- Historical Fiction
- Mystery or Fantasy
- Your Choice

### **Classical Literature:**

Mark Twain described classical literature this way: “a book which people praise and don't read.” This summer, we will go beyond simply praising these books, and discover the beauty of classical literature. You are welcome to search out the best book for you. Below is a list of authors to help you decide:

Harper Lee  
F. Scott Fitzgerald  
John Steinbeck  
Mark Twain  
J.D. Salinger  
William Golding  
Nathaniel Hawthorne  
William Shakespeare (Don't pick *Romeo & Juliet*)  
George Orwell  
Joseph Heller  
Arthur Miller  
Ernest Hemingway  
Homer (Don't pick *The Odyssey*)  
Jane Austen  
Charlotte Bronte  
Louisa May Alcott  
Lewis Carroll  
Charles Dickens

William Golding  
Robert Louis Stevenson  
John Steinbeck  
Ernest Hemingway  
J.R.R. Tolkien  
Ray Bradbury (Don't pick *Fahrenheit 451*)  
Ayn Rand  
Leo Tolstoy  
Victor Hugo  
Herman Melville  
Thomas Hardy  
Rudyard Kipling  
Miguel de Cervantes  
Mary Shelley  
Alexandre Dumas

**Historical Fiction:**

Oftentimes, historical events come to life through fictional characters. We learn about geography, philosophy, history, and literacy in a single text. Choose a novel with a topic that interests you.

**Mystery or Fantasy:**

Sometimes, we need to enter a make-believe world to escape the monotony of every day life. Read about wizards or goblins. Witches or trolls. Don't like fantasy? Dive into a murder mystery or suspenseful story. Enjoy yourself!

**Your Choice:**

Have you had your eye on a book for a while? Read it! This category is all based on what you want to read. The requirement? Make sure it is age appropriate and at least 150 pages. That's it.

## *500 Books of Summer*

As a GROUP, our goal is to read 500 books this summer. Currently, there are 120 students signed up for Honors Language Arts. If every student completes the 4 required reading books, we will have 480 books completed. That means that we will be 20 books short. If you want to contribute to the group goal, read a 5<sup>th</sup> book. If we reach 500 books, we will have a celebration when school begins.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***How will you know if I actually read the book this summer?***

Well, for one, I hope you are honest about reading these texts. To make sure though, I will be checking your AR test history to verify that these are new texts to you. You will also be completing journal entries that show your connection to the texts.

### ***How many pages do the books need to be?***

I require that the books you select are over 150 pages. Most books in your age bracket, however, will be much larger than that.

### ***We are going on a long road trip this summer. Do audiobooks count?***

Yes. Try to follow along as much as possible.

### ***Can I use Spark Notes?***

You are welcome to use Spark Notes (or a comparable program) as a companion to the text, NOT a replacement.

### ***My friend is reading the same book as me. Is that okay?***

Yes.

### ***I started a book, but I hate it. Can I switch?***

Absolutely. You need to make sure that you have the 4 books read by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of school.

### ***I hate reading. What should I do?***

Learn to like reading. Find the best book for you. It's out there, I promise.

### ***Ugh. This is a lot of reading.***

It's not bad. I promise. To prove it, I will be completing the summer project with you. If I can do it, you can too. If you read 30-45 minutes a day, you should be able to finish this project easily.

### ***If I don't finish the summer project, will I fail?***

Not likely. The summer project is worth 10% of your 1<sup>st</sup> quarter grade. If you don't complete it, you won't get an A, but you won't fail either.

### ***Can I take AR tests on these books when school starts?***

Yes. Please do.

### ***When is this due?***

Everything will be due on **Wednesday, September 14**. We will start our presentations that day.

***Presentation? What?***

Don't stress. I'll introduce the presentation requirements when we return to school.

***What if I have another question or need clarification?***

Email me. I check my email nearly every day.

ashley.taylor@jordandistrict.org

## Reading Journal

You may only use a journal prompt once for each book. All responses must be written in a complete paragraph. You will need to **complete 10 different prompts for each book** you read. You can either type your responses or keep them in a notebook that is only used for this project.

What is the problem or conflict of your book? Which characters/people are involved? How do you think the problem or conflict might be solved?

What is the setting of your story? How does the setting add to the story? Remember that setting is both place and time of the story. Your book will most likely not tell you exactly when and where it takes place, but you can find clues in the story.

Describe a minor character in your book. Identify the character by name and describe him/her. What is the character's part in the story? How does this character feel about the main character and vice-versa? Use examples from the story.

Are the events in your book realistic or unrealistic? Explain using specific examples from the book.

Explain how a character in your book reminds you of yourself or someone you know. For example, do you like some of the same things, have some of the same interests, or have similar problems as a character in your book?

Tell why you chose your book to read. What factors went into your decision (interesting cover, back cover, recommendation)?

How does your book begin? First describe the events that start your story. Then share if this is an effective way for the author to begin the book. Would you change anything if given a chance?

Who is the main character in your book? What is this character like? Tell the character's name, age, appearance, friends, personality, and problems.

Would you like to live like the characters in your book? Explain how they live (the situation) and why or why not you would like to live like that.

If you were the main character in your book, how would you handle the situation he/she faces in the story? Be sure to briefly describe the situation before describing how you would handle it.

What do you think of the title of your book? Is it a good title? Does it fit your book? Why do you think the author chose this title? Explain.

(This prompt could be completed at any point of the story.) Predict what will happen next in your book. To do this you must briefly explain the situation, make your prediction, and tell why you predict this.

Who is the antagonist (bad guy) in your book? Describe this character and the way they “oppose” or work against, the main character.

What character in your book do you despise? Name this character, tell what part they play in the story, and describe why you don’t like the character.

How did the main character in your book change or grow from the beginning to end?

What hints did the author give us about the how the story would end?

What caused the story to end the way it did? Was it luck, hard work, skill, or a bright idea? Which of these qualities is more important in real life?

What is a theme that is covered in this book? How did the theme develop?