

St. Rita School

Grade Six going into Grade Seven

2014-2015

Summer Prep Work for Mr. Matthews' Language Arts/Literature Classes

Dear Students: You have just finished a solid, academically oriented school year and are (hopefully) motivated to continue your preparation for high school. This is not busy work. The vocabulary is important, as is the practice of reading something thoughtfully and carefully before producing a written response. The reading is intended to be enjoyable yet provocative. Film is a key part of our literature curriculum and is excellent for providing a visual perspective on the 'human condition.'

Some of these things may appear somewhat esoteric at first, but don't worry; a little intellectual humility is good for us. There is a big difference between difficulty and discomfort. Stay focused on the salient points; the rest will fall into place. The 8th grade has survived two years of this...you will too. As has been my practice every year that I have been a teacher, I will give you the best I've got. What you take is up to you.

ALL SUMMER WORK MUST BE DONE ON THE COMPUTER AND PRINTED OUT- PLEASE-NO COVERS OR FOLDERS...JUST A STAPLE IN THE UPPER LEFT-HAND CORNER...CAPISCE? **ALL WORK IS DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

PARENTS: Nothing in this summer work packet is beyond a sixth-grade student's ability. Everything contained here has been explained to the students, and ample opportunity was given for any and all questions. Let's see what they can do.

PART ONE

POETRY

1. Read the two attached poems (*Abou Ben Adhem, Waiting for the Splash*), and for each poem write a one paragraph response to the following questions:

-What is the author saying to you?

What mood or feeling can you identify in each poem?

For both of these questions, try to explain and support your thinking. What gives you the impression you get; why do you think the author wrote this?

PART TWO

LITERATURE

1. Look up the definition for EACH of these literary terms. Next, find a word or phrase that could be YOUR definition, and write it out as well. For example, in addition to the formal definition for PROTAGONIST, your definition could also simply be “the good guy” – though this isn’t the case every time, but we’ll speak about this later. Anything synonymous is fine. The important thing is that you understand each of these terms.

comedy

foil

catharsis

pathos

semantics

resolution

poetic justice

mood

morphology

etymology

metaphor

motif

leitmotif

style

subplot

surrealism

2. Read the short story “A Piece Of String” by Guy De Maupassant (you can find it in a book of short stories by De Maupassant, as part of a collection of stories by various authors, or “T Build A Fire” by Jack London. iBoth can be found on the Internet or in collections (anthologies) of short stories. Write a brief response (4 or 5 sentences) to the following questions, and support your position.

What type of irony is seen in the stories?

Was the outcome fair and just (A Piece of String), or avoidable (To Build A Fire)?

What is the main conflict in the story you have chosen?

3. Read the attached interpretation of “The Human Condition.” Try to extract as much meaning from it as you can. Don’t worry about it-just read it as thoughtfully and seriously as you can. When you have done so, write a brief (3-4 sentences) statement explaining what YOU think is meant by the human condition.

PART THREE

WRITING

You are asked to write two brief essays on the following two topics:

1. Which is more difficult-to stand up for ourselves, or to stand up for someone else?

2. Is there a difference between a reason and an excuse, and explain what the difference could be.

Each essay should be no more than two paragraphs in length. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence and its supporting points. A paragraph is 5 to 8 cohesive sentences. Two sentences is a fortune cookie, which is not part of the assignment. Given the amount of time you have to work on this, it is reasonable for me to expect writing that is free from careless/minor spelling errors. SUGGESTION: Have the first paragraph set the stage; introduce your topic...The second paragraph is comprised of your message, what it is that you really wish to say.

PART FOUR

FILM

You are asked to watch *To Kill A Mockingbird* (black and white, starring Gregory Peck...easy to find to purchase or to rent) and then do the following:

1. Identify one character that you feel made the most significant contribution to the film, and explain why you think so (this should be about two paragraphs or so in length).
2. Prepare FOUR clear and relevant questions that could be used as the basis for discussion in our literature class. These questions are to be written out, but they do not need to be answered. This will be excellent preparation for our reading of *To Kill A Mockingbird*, which will be our first novel.

REMEMBER; All of the above work is due the FIRST day of school.

1. Starting with the second week of school, you are to work on two Monster Words (the Monster Words list is attached to your packet) per week. You are to look up each word, write its definition AND a synonym (in parentheses) for the word, and then write a sentence that demonstrates your ability to use the word correctly. This means two words/two sentences every week. The first assignment is due the Friday of the second week of school.

You do not have to do anything with these words until the second week of school. However, the master student will utilize every opportunity to be prepared. In other words, the fact that you have been given this list NOW should impel you to at least read the list.

Begin the year with a commitment to giving your work the best effort you can. The seventh grade year will go by very fast. Look how quickly grade six disappeared!

I cannot help you if I do not know that you need it. The report card is the worst way to find out what you probably already suspected... The whole point of my being here is to work with you and give you the benefit of my experience.

I look forward to working with you. See you soon.

Robert J. Matthews
Literature/Language Arts