

St. Rita School

Grade Seven going into Grade Eight

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

2014-2015

Dear Students: You have just finished a solid, academically oriented school year. You are well prepared and (hopefully) motivated to continue your preparation for high school. The eighth grade year will pass very quickly; time will be your most valuable commodity. Get started and get organized. There is no magic to being a "master student." You simply have to want it.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

"Like" "kind of" "maybe kind of" "kind of like" and other such expressions typically do not have a place in any written work, and are not appropriate for classroom discussion and participation. Should you include any of these expressions in any verbal response or discussion, you will receive a reminder from me asking you to keep such expressions out of your verbal academic work.

PLEASE NOTE THAT EVERYTHING MUST BE DONE ON AND PRINTED BY COMPUTER. NO COVERS OR FOLDERS – JUST A STAPLE IN THE UPPER LEFT-HAND CORNER – CAPISCE?

The following assignments must be handed on the **FIRST** day of school:

PART ONE

## LITERATURE

1. You will look up and write out the definitions for the following literary terms, AND you will write YOUR OWN definition for each term as well. This means that the completed assignment will have a formal/dictionary definition AND your own definition-in your own words-that indicates you understand what each of these terms means.

antagonist	protagonist	author's purpose	character
characterization	conflict	connotation	denotation
foil	idiom	lyric poetry	metaphor
irony	setting	plot	mood
symbol	theme	conflict	climax
semantics	etymology	morphology	subplot

## READING

You are to read "To Build A Fire" by Jack London (can be found online, in a Jack London anthology, and in collections of short stories by various authors)

When you have finished the story, respond to the following (your responses should be one to two paragraphs in length):

1. What/whom is the antagonist? Could there be more than one?
2. What caused this man's death?
3. What is the theme of this story?

## PART TWO

### FILM

You are to watch The Oxbow Incident (easy to find in VHS or DVD, the black and white version starring Henry Fonda). This film will establish some important general aspects of film as literature, as well as facilitating further discussion on the human condition. We will be reading this novel in class shortly after we return. After watching the film you are to 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. They do not need to be answered. For example:

-how might this film be compared with To Kill A Mockingbird ?

-why was the "mob" in such a hurry?

-who was to blame for what happened?

-what were the most significant conflicts in the story?

### PART THREE

#### POETRY

Read the attached poems: The Panther by Rainier Maria Rilke, and A Man by Nina Cassia. For EACH of them, write a response to the following questions. These are not intended to be single-sentence answers. Put some thought into this.

1. What is the author's message? Why was this poem written? What is its purpose?

2. What is the mood of this poem? How does it make you feel? Why?

### PART FOUR

#### SHORT ESSAY TOPICS

You are asked to write a paragraph or two in response to EACH of the following topics; stay focused and support your position. Try to avoid beginning a sentence with "I."

1. "Why will we sit through a "boring" movie, but not finish a "boring" book?"

2. “What aspect of your world/culture are you most optimistic about? Why?”

PART FIVE

VOCABULARY

1. Using the attached list of Monster Words, you will focus on **FOUR** words and a synonym for each one of them. You will look them up in your dictionary, learn what they mean, and then you will use each of them correctly in a sentence. This assignment is due EVERY FRIDAY, beginning with the second week of school. You do not have to do anything NOW with these words; instructions will be given when we reconvene. You might want to have a look at the list, though...just for fun.

**Don't forget; All written work is to be done on the computer and turned in on the FIRST day of school. I look forward to working with you. See you soon.**

Robert J. Matthews  
Literature/Language Arts