

Thornton-Donovan School
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The English Department at Thornton-Donovan School requires students to read AT LEAST two books – one required with an accompanying paragraph response and one choice with an accompanying project (see assignment parameters below).

Students should review the sample response and use the graphic organizer to produce a concise, yet fully developed paragraph.

2017 Summer Reading List Grades 6-8

	English 6	English 7	English 8
Required	<i>WONDER</i> by R.J. Palacio	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> by Harper Lee	<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i> by Sherman Alexie
Choice	<i>The Lions of Little Rock</i> by Kristin Levine	<i>Backlash</i> by Sarah Darer Littman	<i>Boys in the Boat</i> by Daniel James Brown
	<i>Booked or Crossover</i> by Kwame Alexander	<i>Dead Girls Don't Lie</i> by Jennifer Shaw Wolf	<i>The Freedom Writers Diary</i> by Erin Gruwell
	<i>Esperanza Rising</i> by Pam Munoz Ryan	<i>A Night Divided</i> by Sarah Darer Littman	<i>Eleven</i> by Tom Rogers
	<i>One Crazy Summer</i> by Rita Williams-Garcia	<i>The Boys Who Challenged Hitler</i> by Phillip Hoose	<i>Brown Girl Dreaming</i> by Jacqueline Woodson
	<i>The Girl Who Could Fly</i> by Victoria Forester	<i>A Girl Named Disaster</i> by Nancy Farmer	<i>Unbroken</i> by Laura Hillenbrand

Students will respond to a question that corresponds to the required book. Students are to write a ONE paragraph response for their required book. Writing prompts for each of the assigned books are attached, along with a writing sample to review and instructions for writing the paragraph. Students are to respond to ONE and ONLY ONE of the prompts.

Required Reading Response Questions

Grade 6: *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio

- How does Auggie change from the beginning of the novel to the end (from what to what and why)?
- Explain the theme the value of friendship in relation to this novel.

- Explain the line “Don’t judge a boy by his face” in relation to the novel.
- Explain the theme the detrimental effects of bullying in relation to this novel.
- Does humor play a positive or negative role in this novel? Explain.

Grade 7: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

Answer one of the following questions following the attached response model:

- Explain the need to be empathetic as a major theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
- Why is it a sin to kill a mockingbird and what is the greater figurative meaning?
- Explain the meaning of the Atticus’s words in the context of the novel: “The one thing that doesn’t abide by majority rule is a person’s conscience.”

Grade 8: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie

Answer one of the following questions:

- How does Junior struggle with his identity?
- Explain the theme the value of hope in relation to this novel.
- How does Junior overcome the stigma of the reservation?
- Explain the theme the effect of fear in relation to this novel.
- What role does economics or culture play in this novel?

Follow the below response model. Refer to sample before and during writing. An outline and rough draft prior to what is turned in is recommended. A fully developed short response answer is roughly SIX sentences (more likely 8).

Short Response Question Outline

1. A topic sentence that introduces the topic that will be discussed in the paragraph. Answer the question here.
2. A transition sentence that introduces the piece of literature that will be examined and the context (situation) of the quote/paraphrase. Use a colon after the transition sentence if setting up a quote, not a paraphrase.
3. One specific example that supports this topic sentence (quote/paraphrase – grades 7 & 8 must cite).
4. Explanation of what this piece of specific evidence means (can be 2-4 sentences – make sure to explain both the meaning of the quote and how it explains your topic sentence).
5. Concluding sentence that clearly states the overarching final thought on the subject examined.

Sample Response:

Dystopian societies use advertisements to discourage individuals from thinking independently. In Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, Guy Montag confronts this realization when he attempts to read the Bible and the repetitive jingle of a toothpaste advertisement breaks his concentration: “‘Denham’s Dentifrice.’ They toil not – ‘Denham’s –’ Consider the lilies of the field, shut up, shut up ‘Dentrifrice!’” (75). The people around Montag succumb to the catchy tune and begin humming and tapping, further distracting him. Advertisements like this prevent the public from concentrating by demanding the consumer buy the product without thinking about the decision. However, Montag as an independent thinker cannot stand the mindless drone of the advertisement

that pounds a thought into his head. When one does not think for himself, his society can control and manipulate him.

Quick tips:

- Read the entire book – do not skim/use the internet in place of reading
- Take notes on index cards/in a note book after each chapter – major plot developments/questions/interpretations
- Answer the question
- Theme is not a synonym of moral: themes identify overarching trends present across various texts/people/societies while morals provide advice pertaining to right and wrong
- Write in the present tense
- Try to avoid passive voice
- Type out the response – size 12, Times New Roman font, double-spaced

Presentation Instructions:

While it is not required, it is **STRONGLY** recommended that when students read they take bulleted notes after each chapter. These notes can be done on index cards or in a notebook and contain reactions to plot developments, characterizations, questions about the text, figurative language, personal connections to the text, and overarching themes.

ALL GRADES should take notes on their choice reading book since they will give a presentation during the first week of school.

Grades 7-8 must complete their projects over the summer and bring them in on the **SECOND** day of school. Grade 6 will receive an alternate assignment on the first day of school.

The instructions for the project are the following:

- Using notes and general knowledge of the text examined, students create either a poster (2x3) or a Powerpoint – five [5] content slides (this does not include a cover page)
- Identify between six-to-ten **MAJOR** plot developments
- Identify **ONE** major **THEME** (not a moral) **Ex.** The superficial tendencies of human nature v. You should never judge a book by its cover (moral)
- Cite two pieces of evidence in support of theme
- Be prepared to summarize the plot and explain the major theme identified using the evidence cited
- Each presentation be decorated in an appropriate and creative way – minimize blank space
- Focus on the substance, or the big ideas, of the text, not the fluff