

Ms. Hancock's Honor's 8th Grade ELA Summer Reading Assignment

Introduction to the Course:

Greetings to all incoming 8th graders! I am very excited to meet you all and have you in my class for the 2025-2026 school year! This year, we will begin to tackle the innerworkings of literary analysis and all it entails. Of course, before one can learn to run, one must learn to walk.

Therefore, for your summer reading assignment, you will read *How to Read Like a Professor for Kids* by Thomas C. Foster. Please ensure you read **only** the 'for kids' version! This book will lay all the foundations down for beginning to close read literature.

In eighth-grade English Language Arts, we will be learning how to read for depth and meaning, and we will be learning how to analyze texts, both fiction and non-fiction. As such, we begin the learning process by reading an informational text that reveals and explains an author's goals and underlying messages.

Expectations for the class:

As you become young scholars, it is imperative that you meet expectations. In my class, it will be the expectation that you arrive prepared with all necessary supplies, to include reading materials and assignments for review. In addition, it is recommended that you come to class well-rested and ready to think. Literary analysis requires critical thinking to understand the deeper meaning of a text.

Contact Info:

I can be reached via email. I check it at least once a week over the summer, often more, and I am available to answer any questions you may have at the email below.

hancoda@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us

Summer Assignment:

It is the expectation that you complete the reading during the summer as it will be referenced throughout the school year, and you will be tested on the book during the second week of school.

Instructions:

1. Please obtain a copy of the book. It can be purchased on Amazon for less than \$8.
2. Read the book closely and take notes using the note-taking guide attached to this document.
3. On the note-taking side, you will provide responses **directly** from the text. Please be sure to cite your response by providing the **page number in parenthesis** at the end of your response.
4. On the left side of the notes, you will provide your own example from a text or movie that you are familiar with. Citations are not necessary for your anecdotal responses.

5. Finally, choose a chapter from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and use it to analyze something you have already read. For example, if you noticed a recurrence of spring in your novel, compare it to Chapter 10: It's More than just Rain or Snow or Springtime.

Expectations for Submission:

Your notes can be completed by printing the graphic organizer and filling it in. Your chapter analysis must be a typed response of 200-500 words in MLA format (Times New Roman font, size 12 font, double space, with correct heading. Please use the online Purdue Owl MLA format as guidance.) Please see the example for further assistance.

Due Date:

Your assignment will be due on **Monday, August 12th**. After this date, in accordance with the Richmond County Board of Education regulations, your assignment will receive a deduction of 5% each school day it is late up to 25%. After which, the assignment will no longer be accepted. It is the expectation that all assignments are submitted in a timely manner.

How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Kids Notes

Notes	Examples – Write an example from the text that you are familiar with (and/or include your own example)
<p>1. Every Trip is a Quest (Except When It's Not)</p> <p>What 5 things does a story need to be a quest?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.4.5. <p>What is always the real reason for a quest?</p>	
<p>2. Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion</p> <p>Why do authors include meal scenes in books?</p>	
<p>3. Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires</p> <p>What is vampirism in novels really about? What do they symbolize?</p>	
<p>4. If It's a Square, It's a Sonnet</p> <p>What is the shape and structure of a sonnet?</p> <p>Explain the two parts of a sonnet, and their function.</p>	
<p>5. Now Where Have I Seen This Before?</p> <p>There's no such thing as _____.</p> <p>What is the benefit in recognizing connections between works of literature?</p>	

6. When In Doubt, It's From Shakespeare...

Why do writers allude to Shakespeare?

7 ...Or the Bible

What are the elements of a Christ figure?

Why are there Christ figures?

8. Hansel and Gretel

Why do authors use fairytales and legends?

9. It's Greek to Me

What is myth?

What are the four great struggles of the human being?

10. It's More than just Rain or Snow or Springtime

Why do authors use rain?

Fog?

Snow?

What do the seasons symbolize?

Spring –

Summer –

Autumn –

Winter –

11. Is that a Symbol?

What is a symbol?

What do symbols stand for?

12. It's All Political

What is a social critic?

What is political writing?

What are some common political topics in literature?

13. Geography Matters

Why is geography important in literature?

Interlude: One Story

What is intertextuality?

What is an archetype?

14. Marked for Greatness

Why do authors give characters physical flaws?

15. He's Blind for a Reason, You Know

Why do authors use blind characters or talk about blindness?

16. It's Never Just Heart Disease...and Rarely Just Illness

What does heart disease mean in literature?

What makes a prime literary disease?

1.

2.

3.

17. Don't Read With Your Eyes

What does Foster mean when he says "Don't read with your eyes"?

18. Is He Serious? And Other Ironies

What is irony?

Irony trumps _____.

Jane Doe

Ms. Hancock

8th Grade ELA

12 August 2025

Sample: Every Trip is a Quest in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*

When a reader thinks of a quest, they may think of a knight in shining armor going through a perilous journey to rescue a princess from a tower. However, this is not always the case. In Thomas Foster's guide *How to Read Like a Professor for Kids*, a quest need only have a quest, a destination, a stated reason for going there, challenges along the way, and the real reason to go there (7). In Charles Dickens novel *Great Expectations*, the main protagonist Pip finds himself working as a serving boy for Mr. Pumblechook. During his time working for Pumblechook, Pip eventually travels to Miss Havisham's decrepit mansion where he sent to amuse her and meets the beautiful Estella. But is this a quest? Yes!

Pip is the quester in this scenario. It is his duty to travel to Miss Havisham's abode to amuse her and play for her. That is his reason for the journey. The quest in of itself is one of peril and torment for Pip as he is forced to suffer Mr. Pumblechook's pompous attitude and incessant math riddles. He eventually comes to the princess's castle, Miss Havisham's decrepit mansion, where he meets Estella. In his meeting with Estella is where the reader can finally find out the real reason for his quest.

Pip's journey of self-discovery, Foster states that the real reason for a quest is "*always* self-knowledge" (8). In Pip's first meeting with Estella and Miss Havisham, the two of them torment him because of his social class. Estella establishes a sense of identify crisis in Pip by pointing out his faults as a member of the lower class. She makes fun of his calloused hands and

work boots, both of which are parts of him that he had never felt a reason to be ashamed of before. During his time with Miss Havisham and Estella, Pip becomes awfully aware of his position in life and begins to see, for the first time, what it means to be working class.

With Foster's idea of what a quest is in mind, a reader can assume that Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations* is, indeed, a quest for Pip. The novel contains a quester, Pip. It includes various destinations, but the most important one being Miss Havisham's mansion. It includes a stated reason for Pip to quest there; to entertain Miss Havisham. Pip's journey does indeed include challenges (math! Yuck!). Finally, the reader is made privy to the real reason for Pip's journey, self-discovery.