



# Westminster Christian Academy

## 11th Grade Summer Reading

### 11th GRADE **HONORS** AMERICAN LITERATURE

Summer Reading 2026

Mr. Yergler

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This junior level course is an accelerated survey of both classic and modern works of American literature and culture for students who have a love for learning and enjoy reading. It has been argued that every theme of American literature can be found in Melville's epic *Moby Dick*. Engaging his masterpiece is our first task when we return to school in August. Take courage, I will be your captain and together we will plumb the depths of this masterpiece.

Reading and understanding *Moby-Dick* is a difficult task at any age. To help you succeed, your summer reading, *In the Heart of the Sea*, functions as a thrilling primer to Melville's wild whaling world. Your summer reading assignments will also introduce you to some themes of this class and serve as the basis for our initial discussions and writing when you return.

#### 1) *In the Heart of the Sea*

Nathaniel Philbrick

ISBN 10 - 0141001828 or ISBN 13 - 978-0141001821

Winner of the National Book Award, Nathaniel Philbrick's book is a fantastic saga of survival and adventure, steeped in the lore of whaling, with deep resonance in American literature and history.

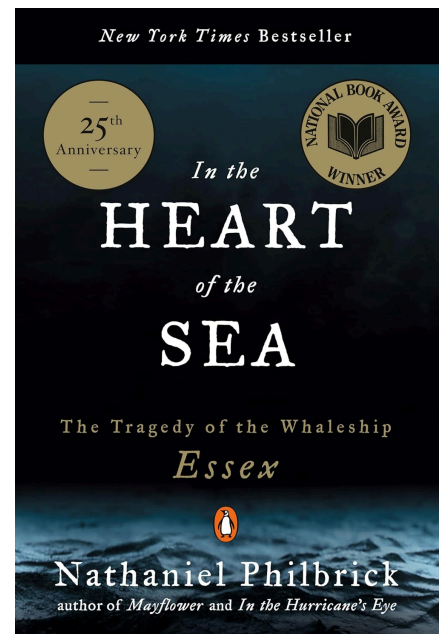
#### 2) *What is an American?*

Letter III of *Letters from an American Farmer*

Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur.

This short essay should be found attached in PDF by following this [link](#).

As you read, attempt to make connections to *In the Heart of the Sea*. You should annotate carefully as you read this essay. **Hint: Read this essay within the last two weeks of summer so it is fresh in your mind for our first week back.**



## Annotation and Reading Instructions

Reading Journal on *In The Heart of the Sea*:

In order to help you successfully complete this year's summer reading assignment, you will be asked to keep a journal as you read. In this journal, you will record your thoughts as you progress through the story. Below, you will find several prompts that you should use to focus your journal entries. Your reading journal will be your first graded assignment for your Junior English class. Additionally, the reading journal will serve as a helpful tool for the first major reading assignments in our class, which will require you to use knowledge from this reading.

Instructions:

- Date each entry.
- Copy the question you are addressing.
- Fully develop your response with examples and explanations including cited textual evidence.
- Each entry should be a minimum of 2 pages handwritten in your brown English notebook purchased in the bookstore.
- You may use personal language such as "I" or "me" since these responses are not formal essays.
- You must answer the questions from each section.
- Be prepared to take a reading test over "In the Heart of the Sea" upon returning.

## Summer Reading Journal Prompts

### **Section 1: Preface & Chapters 1-3**

How does Philbrick describe Nantucket's culture and economy? How do the town's values reflect larger American ideals of hard work, religious commitment, tolerance, and exploration?

### **Section 2: Chapters 4-7**

What might the whale attack symbolize in the context of American life/culture? Does it reflect the conflict between human ambition and nature's power or technology and nature? Perhaps a different tension?

### **Section 3: Chapters 8-10**

What moral dilemmas arise in this section? How do the men justify their actions, and what does this suggest about human nature when pushed to the extremes?

### **Section 4: Chapters 11-15 (Epilogue)**

How do the survivors react emotionally and physically upon being rescued? How do their experiences shape their lives afterward?

### Rubric for Summer Reading Journals

5	4	3	2	1
<p>Responses are richly developed with personal reflection (Journals) and multiple specific examples from the text. Responses display close and careful reading of the text and synthesize where appropriate. Accurate citation included.</p>	<p>Responses are developed with some specific references or details from the text. Some personal connections or reflections made. Some synthesizing of ideas. Accurate citation included.</p>	<p>Responses are partially developed with some ideas not fully explained or supported with examples from the text. Little synthesizing of ideas. Some accurate citations included.</p>	<p>Responses are very general and lack specific examples from the text. Responses are underdeveloped. No synthesizing has taken place.</p>	<p>Responses show little to no evidence of actual reading OR Responses are significantly underdeveloped</p>

