

Name:

School:



**English Language Arts 1-2 Honors Summer Reading Assignment:
Due Monday, August 10th, 2026**

Summer Reading Choices:

Speak

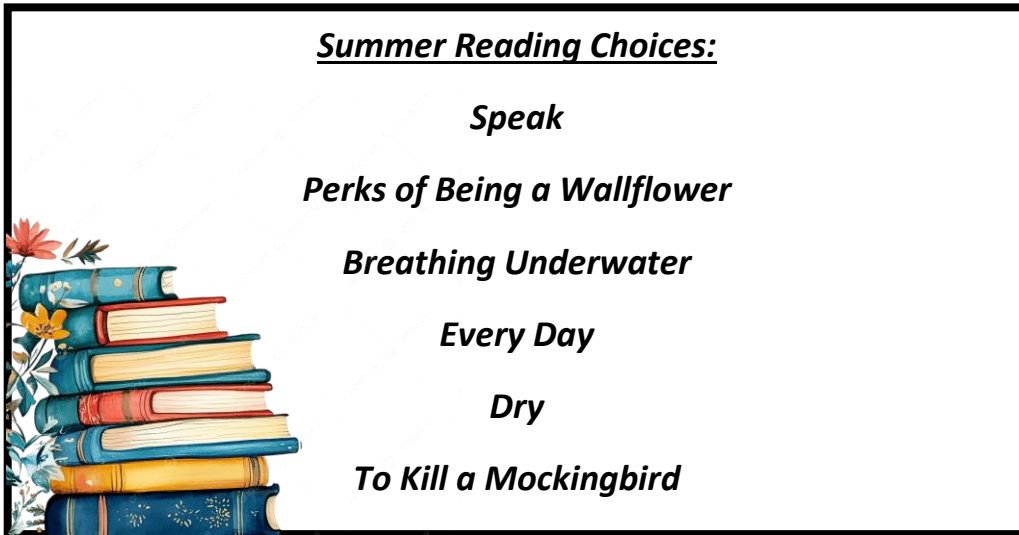
Perks of Being a Wallflower

Breathing Underwater

Every Day

Dry

To Kill a Mockingbird



Directions:

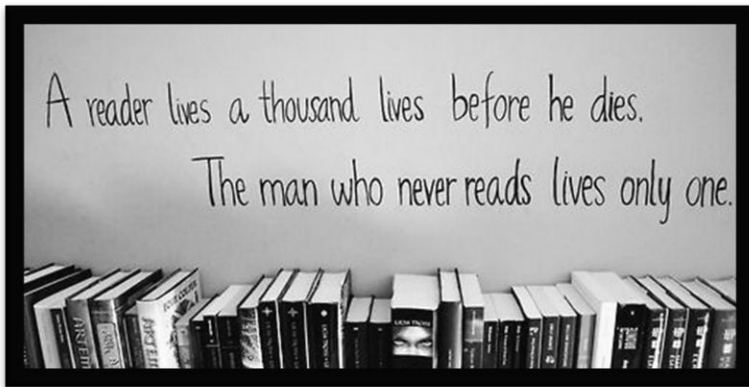
1. Read through this packet to understand the expectations for the ELA 1-2 Honors Summer Assignments.
2. Obtain a copy of one of the books listed above. You may purchase your own copy or visit a local library. Some texts are available for free online, as well!
3. Your answers must be TYPED in a 12 point, plain font and numbered to match the questions in this packet. I recommend doing all your work on one Google Doc so you can easily provide proof of authorship if requested.
4. You will turn your work into CANVAS, our online learning platform. You will be able to start submitting your work on the first day of school.
5. Your work will be submitted through a plagiarism detector, so ensure your work is your own. You may also be requested to provide proof of authorship, so complete all work on the same GoogleDoc, which records your revision and editing history. Do not use AI to complete your work.



Dear Students,

My name is Mrs. Sarah Vecera, and I'm excited to be your teacher next year at DVHS. Inside this packet, you'll find important information about your summer assignments, a requisite for ELA Honors and AP courses. Please take the time to read everything carefully. Once you've finished, begin Assignment One right away. Completing it not only confirms that you understand what's expected of you, but it will also count as one of your first grades in the fall, helping you start the semester on the right foot.

You will need to secure access to one of the selected novels to read over the summer. This year's selected novels will help you practice with some of the types of analysis that we will be doing in Unit 1. The selected novels for summer reading are: *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky; *Speak*, by Laurie Halse Anderson; *Every Day*, by David Levithan; *Dry*, by Jarrod and Neal Shusterman; *Breathing Underwater*, by Alex Finn; and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.



Each of these books has a young protagonist who is forced to deal with challenging problems at school, home, communities, or within relationships and within themselves. These are *young-adult* novels, not children's literature, and they will begin to address some more mature themes and issues. We do not acknowledge or condone these instances, if any; rather we will simply investigate as if we were doctors examining a patient...and then we learn from it,

becoming improved practitioners of thought. As you read these novels, reflect and analyze the personal growth of the characters throughout the novel, and the writer's storytelling ability. How does the author try to keep you interested and reading? How does the character change over the course of the book? When you enter this course, you will be expected to participate in analysis activities both with groups and as a class on your selected book. Either while you read or after you read, complete the Character Analysis and Long Answer activities included in this packet. Reading should be finished before the first day of school to avoid a stressful week, and assignments will be due the second week of class.

Your Assignments are included in this packet, and the first one involves emailing me. This will confirm you have received the ELA 1-2 Honors information and expectations. If you have questions regarding any of these expectations, please feel free to contact me at Sarah.Vecera@dvusd.org.

I am looking forward to an amazing year! Happy reading!

Thank you,

Sarah Vecera

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is Sarah Vecera, and I will be your child's ELA 1-2 Honors teacher for the upcoming school year at Deer Valley High School. I look forward to meeting you and your student in August. In the meantime, this packet includes the required summer assignment.

The Summer Reading Packet serves several important purposes. First, it helps students continue reading, thinking, and engaging with texts over the summer. Summer assignments are a standard part of the DVHS Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) ELA program, and students should expect similar work in future years. Additionally, completing reading at home allows us to dedicate more class time to deeper analysis, discussion, and writing during the school year. The assignment also gives me an early sense of each student's reading comprehension, analytical thinking, and writing skills, while helping students understand the expectations of Honors-level coursework.

The selected novels explore challenges related to adolescence, relationships, and personal decision-making. The protagonists in our stories each deal with the tragedy of circumstance, the mistreatment by or of others, and the consequences of their actions. I encourage you to review the summaries in the packet and help your child choose a book that is appropriate for them. These texts will connect to themes in our first unit and future works such as *The Odyssey* and *Romeo and Juliet*, while also encouraging students to find value (and hopefully enjoyment!) in reading. I truly believe that if I can get a student to *enjoy* reading, they will begin helping themselves become more literate citizens. However, getting students to read outside of class can be difficult, and I'll need your help to make sure they are *actually* practicing their reading at home. If you are concerned about the summer novel selections, you may email me and I can talk you through the process of selecting an alternative title for your student.

ELA 1-2 Honors is an accelerated course designed for motivated students. Students will be expected to read regularly at home, write consistently, participate actively in class, and engage in collaborative learning. Please ensure your student understands the level of commitment required to be successful.

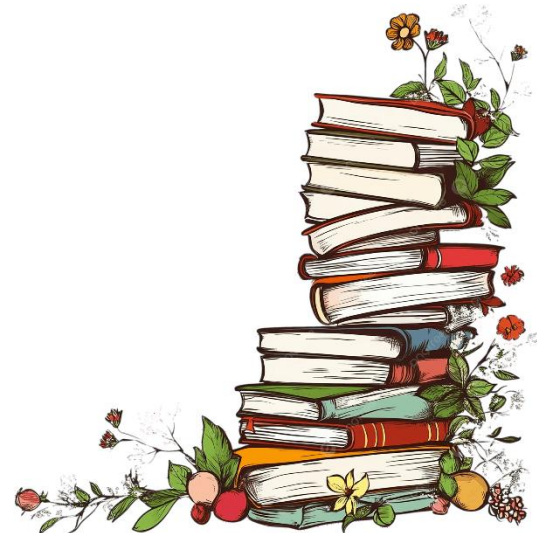
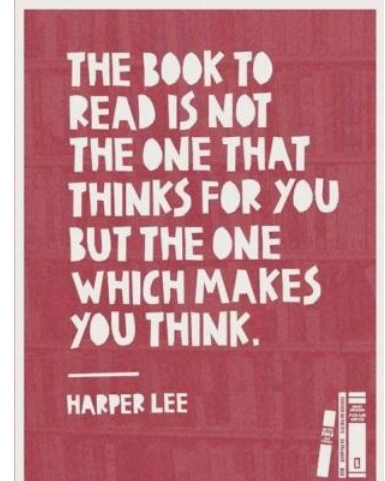
If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at Sarah.Vecera@dvusd.org, and I will respond as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time,

Sarah Vecera

(602)467-6858 (during school year)

Sarah.Vecera@dvusd.org



Summer Assignments

Assignment 1: Email Introduction

1. After receiving this packet, log in to your email address and write me an email at Sarah.Vecera@dvusd.org. The Subject Line should say : ELA 1-2 H Introduction.
 - a. . If you already have a learner.dvusd.org email account, please use that one.
2. In the body of the message, please include the following:
 - a. Introduction with name and age, and anything you'd like me to know about you
 - b. A recent picture
 - c. School background information- schools you have attended, programs you are involved with, honors/advanced courses taken, athletics, arts, activities, etc.
 - d. Hobbies/Interests- your favorite class in school and why, career aspirations, hobbies, and other interesting/unique information
 - e. What you are looking forward to most about high school
3. Before you send, **EDIT**. This is not a text message. It is a professional email to a teacher, so use proper capitalization and punctuation. *Set a good first impression!*
4. Wait for a reply from me to verify that I have received your work! Be patient. It may take a while depending on when you send. I usually set all these emails aside and start replying in early July. I look forward to meeting you!

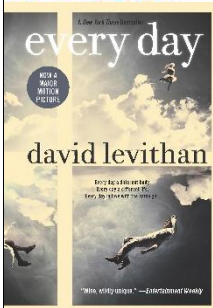
Assignment 2: Independent Summer Reading

Part 1: Character Analysis- Analyze three characters from your selected novel by exploring their motivations, relationships, growth, and conflicts—*creatively*. You'll bring each character to life by stepping into their shoes and presenting their perspectives in an original and thoughtful way.

Option 1: Character Journals	Option 2: Group Text Message Thread	Option 3: Character Collages with Analysis
Write three separate journal entries (one per character) that explore each character's inner thoughts at a key moment in the novel. Each entry should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sound like the character's voice• Reflect their thoughts, emotions, and motivations• Include references (direct or indirect) to events in the story (make sure to put "quotes" around your text evidence and to cite the page numbers)• Each entry should be at least 200-300 words in length	Create a text message conversation between the three selected characters discussing a major event, decision, or theme in the novel. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be creative with how they might communicate—would one be serious? Another sarcastic? Use language and tone that fits their personalities.• Include a short paragraph (4–6 sentences) explaining the significance of the conversation and how it reflects each character's development. Use a few quotes from the text to support your answer (make sure to put "quotes" around your text evidence and to cite the page numbers)	Design a visual collage for each of the three selected characters (digital or hand-drawn) using symbols, images, colors, and quotes that represent who they are. Then, write a 200–300 word paragraph per character explaining your design choices and analyzing how each character changes (or doesn't) throughout the novel. Use a few quotes from the text to support your answer (make sure to put "quotes" around your text evidence and to cite the page numbers)

Part 2: Long Answer- For each novel, I have selected a few long-answer questions designed to make you think critically. These questions are listed below with the book information. Please be sure to write in complete sentences and to fully explain your answer. Each answer should be a well-written paragraph of 6-8 complete sentences (no incomplete sentence fragments or run-ons!).

PLEASE READ OVER SUMMARIES CAREFULLY AND SELECT THE NOVEL MOST APPROPRIATE AND ENGAGING FOR YOU



Every Day by David Levithan 650L

Awards: New York Times Best Seller, School Library Journal Best of Children's Books 2012, NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR by Booklist

Summary: For “A” life is very different. Every day, A has woken up in a new body. Every day a different body. Every day a different life. There's never any warning

about where it will be or who it will be. A has made peace with that, even established guidelines by which to live: Never get too attached. Avoid being noticed. Do not interfere. But what happens when interfering would save the person's life? Or will prevent someone else from getting hurt? And what happens if A falls in love when tomorrow will be a new life?

Long Answer Questions

1. **A creates and follows several personal rules to navigate their ever-changing life, such as avoiding attachments and not staying in one body for too long. How do these rules shape A's sense of self and interactions with others?**

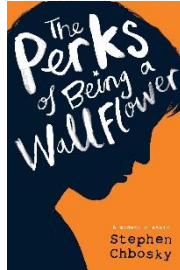
Analyze the specific rules A sets for themselves and how they guide their actions throughout the novel. Why does A create these rules, and how do they both protect and isolate them? Reflect on whether you have ever set personal rules or boundaries to help you navigate challenging situations. How do these rules impact your relationships or personal growth, and do they ever evolve over time? How does A change and develop over the course of the novel? What is the catalyst for this change and growth? What do you predict that A will do next?

2. **In *Every Day*, A wakes up in a different body every day, experiencing life from a variety of perspectives. How does this concept challenge traditional ideas of identity and self?**

Analyze how A's experience of constantly shifting bodies and identities forces them to rethink what makes someone "who they are." How does A grapple with the idea of individuality? Reflect on how you define yourself. What makes you *you*? Are there aspects of your identity that might shift depending on the situation or the people you're around, similar to A's experience?

3. **Throughout the novel, A struggles with the idea of being “good” versus “being true to themselves.” How does A's sense of morality evolve throughout the story, and what role do the different bodies and lives they inhabit play in this evolution?**

Analyze A's internal conflict between doing what feels morally right for the people whose lives they temporarily inhabit and staying true to their own desires and identity. How do the different perspectives A experiences challenge or affirm their beliefs about right and wrong? Reflect on a time when *you've* faced a moral dilemma or had to make a choice between what was right for others and what was right for you. How did you navigate that situation, and what did you learn?



The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky 720L

***Contains Sensitive Material**

Awards: # 1 in Teen and Young Adult Literature on Amazon, New York Times Best Seller, American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults and Best Book for Reluctant Readers

Summary: The critically acclaimed debut novel from Stephen Chbosky, *Perks* follows observant “wallflower” Charlie as he charts a course through the strange world between adolescence and adulthood. First dates, family drama, and new friends. Sex, drugs, and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Devastating loss, young love, and life on the fringes. Caught between trying to live his life and trying to run from it, Charlie must learn to navigate those wild and poignant roller-coaster days known as growing up.

Contains sensitive material

Long Answer Questions

1. **Charlie often observes more than he participates, earning him the label of a “wallflower.” How does this role shape his relationships and understanding of the world around him?**

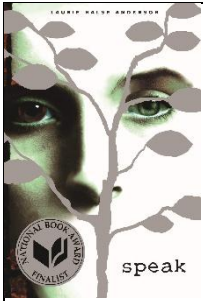
Analyze how Charlie's role as an observer affects his interactions with Sam, Patrick, and others. How does being a wallflower both help and hinder him? Reflect on a time when you felt like an observer in your own life—how did it impact your relationships or your self-understanding? What might Charlie's experience teach us about the value (and challenge) of stepping forward?

2. **The novel explores themes of trauma, healing, and emotional vulnerability through Charlie's journey. How does Chbosky reveal the importance of confronting the past in order to grow?**

Consider how the author gradually unveils Charlie's trauma and the ways it affects his mental health. How do Charlie's relationships and writing help him move toward healing? Reflect on how you personally respond when faced with something difficult. Do *you* open up to others, journal like Charlie, or keep things to yourself? How might the novel encourage readers to seek support or express themselves?

3. **Music, books, and movies play a powerful role in Charlie's life and help him connect with others. How do these forms of art act as emotional anchors or windows into identity?**

Examine how specific songs, books, or films mentioned in the novel help shape Charlie's experiences or mark important moments in his life. Then think about a piece of music, a book, or a movie that has had a significant impact on *your* life. How did it help you understand yourself or connect with someone else? What do Charlie's connections to art say about the power of storytelling?



Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson 690L

***Contains Sensitive Content**

Awards: New York Times Best Seller, A Michal L. Printz Honor Book, A National Book Award Finalist, An Edgar Allan Poe Award Finalist, Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year

Speak

Summary: Freshman year at Merryweather High is not going well for Melinda Sordino. She busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, and now her friends—and even strangers—all hate her. So she stops trying, stops talking. She retreats into her head, and all the lies and hypocrisies of high school become magnified, leaving her with no desire to talk to anyone anyway. But it's not so comfortable in her head, either—there's something banging around in there that she doesn't want to think about. She can't just go on like this forever. Eventually, she's going to have to confront the thing she's avoiding, the thing that happened at the party, the thing that nobody but her knows. She's going to have to speak the truth.

Contains sensitive material.

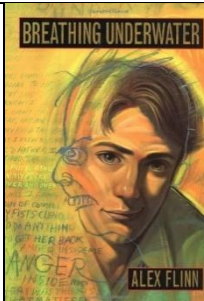
Long Answer Questions

- 1. In what ways does Melinda's silence serve as both a coping mechanism and a form of protest in the novel?**

Analyze how Melinda's withdrawal from speaking is portrayed by Anderson. What does her silence communicate to the reader and to the characters around her? How do her interactions—or lack thereof—with teachers, friends, and family members reflect societal failures to recognize trauma? What does the novel ultimately suggest about the power and limitations of silence?

- 2. Explore how Laurie Halse Anderson critiques the social dynamics of high school in *Speak*. Consider how cliques, peer pressure, and popularity shape the experiences of Melinda and other characters. How does the high school setting contribute to Melinda's sense of isolation? What commentary does the novel offer on conformity, bullying, and the challenges of adolescence? How do these elements reinforce the novel's central themes of identity and self-expression?**
- 3. Melinda uses art as a way to process her trauma and express feelings she can't put into words. If you had to choose a creative outlet (like drawing, music, writing, or something else) to express something difficult or personal, what would you choose and why?**

Think about how Melinda's evolving tree project mirrors her growth and healing. What kind of project or creative expression might help you work through something hard or help someone else understand what you're feeling? Connect your answer to specific moments in the novel where Melinda's creativity gives her strength or clarity.



Breathing Underwater by Alex Flinn 510L

Awards: Winner of the Black-Eyed Susan Award, An ALA Top 10 Best Book for Young Adults, An International Reading Association Young Adult Choices List Pick, A New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age Pick

Summary: Intelligent, popular, handsome, and wealthy, sixteen-year-old Nick Andreas is pretty much perfect—on the outside, at least. What no one knows—not even his best friend—is the terror and anger that Nick faces every time he is alone with his father.

Then he and Caitlin fall in love, and Nick thinks his problems are over. Caitlin is the one person he can confide in, the only person who understands him. But when Nick's anger and jealousy overtake him, things begin to spiral out of control and Nick realizes that he's more his father's son than he wants to be.

Now Nick must confront his inner demons to stop the history of violence from repeating itself.

Long Answer Questions

- 1. How does Nick's use of journaling help him confront the truth about his actions and begin to change?**

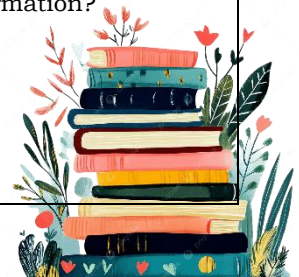
Analyze how the journal entries structure the novel and reveal Nick's internal conflict. How does his voice evolve over time? What moments of self-awareness or denial stand out? Reflect on a time when writing (journaling, venting, or even texting) helped you process a difficult situation. How does writing allow for growth or perspective, both for Nick and for you?

- 2. In *Breathing Underwater*, Alex Flinn explores the cycle of abuse through Nick's relationship with his father and Caitlin. How does Nick's upbringing influence his behavior, and how does the novel portray the challenge of breaking that cycle?**

Examine how Nick's environment and relationships shape his choices. In what ways does he justify or excuse his behavior, and how does this shift as he learns more about himself? Reflect on how family, culture, or community can shape the way people handle conflict or express emotions. What does the novel suggest about the possibility of change?

- 3. One major theme in the novel is accountability, taking responsibility for your actions even when it's hard. How does Nick struggle with accountability, and what are the key turning points in his journey?**

Discuss the moments where Nick avoids responsibility and the events that force him to confront what he's done. How do the support group, his peers, and his experiences affect his growth? Reflect on a moment when you had to take responsibility for something difficult. What did you learn from it? How does this connect to Nick's story and transformation?





Dry by Neal Shusterman and Jarrod Shusterman
790L

Awards received from Cooperative Children's Book Council, ALA Best Books for Young Adults, Grand Canyon Reader Award Nominee, Keystone to Reading Secondary book Award

Summary: When the California drought escalates to catastrophic proportions, one teen is forced to make life and death decisions for her family in this harrowing story of survival from *New York Times* bestselling author Neal Shusterman and Jarrod Shusterman.

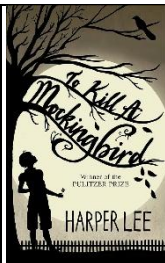
The drought—or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it—has been going on for a while now. Everyone's lives have become an endless list of don'ts: don't water the lawn, don't fill up your pool, don't take long showers.

Until the taps run dry.

Suddenly, Alyssa's quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbors and families turned against each other on the hunt for water. And when her parents don't return and her life—and the life of her brother—is threatened, Alyssa has to make impossible choices if she's going to survive.

Long Answer Questions

- How do the authors use multiple points of view to shape the reader's understanding of the Tap-Out and its impact on society?**
In your response, consider how each narrator contributes to the overall story. What unique perspectives do Alyssa, Kelton, Jacqui, and Henry bring to the narrative? How does the use of multiple voices affect the pacing, emotional resonance, and themes of the novel? What might the authors be saying about the complexity of human behavior in times of crisis?
- In what ways does *Dry* explore the idea of moral compromise during extreme circumstances?**
Analyze key decisions made by characters throughout the novel, especially when survival is at stake. How do these choices reflect the ethical dilemmas individuals face during disaster? Consider the actions of characters like Alyssa, Kelton, and Jacqui—do their decisions align with their values, or do they shift under pressure? What commentary do the authors seem to be making about human nature?
- If you found yourself in the middle of a Tap-Out like the one in *Dry*, which character do you think you would act most like—and why?**
Reflect on the personalities, decisions, and coping styles of characters like Alyssa, Kelton, Jacqui, or Henry. Which one do you relate to the most? Would you try to help others, focus on survival, take charge, or find ways to escape the chaos? Use examples from the book and your own experiences or instincts to support your response. What does this reflection reveal about *your* values and how *you* might handle a crisis?



To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
790L

***Contains Sensitive Content**

Awards include the Pulitzer prize for fiction in 1961, Paperback of the Year, National Conference for Community and Justice award for 1961

Summary: This is a good pick for students who are ready for more complex works of literary merit. It is a more challenging read than the other choices. Although the language is generally accessible, it deals with more complex historical context and themes.

One of the most cherished stories of all time, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has earned many distinctions since its publication in 1960. It won the Pulitzer Prize, was named the best novel of the twentieth century by librarians across the nation, and was voted by readers as America's "most beloved novel" on PBS's *The Great American Read*. A gripping, heart-wrenching, and wholly remarkable tale of coming-of-age in a South poisoned by virulent prejudice, it views a world of great beauty and savage inequities through the eyes of a young girl, Scout Finch, and her brother, Jem, as their father, Atticus—a crusading local lawyer—risks everything to defend a Black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime.

Long-Answer Questions

- How does Scout Finch's perspective as a child shape the reader's understanding of prejudice and morality in the novel?**
Analyze how Scout's narration influences the way events and characters are portrayed. In what ways does her innocence allow her to see truths that adults ignore or justify? How does her perspective evolve over the course of the novel, and what does this suggest about the process of growing up?
- In what ways does Atticus Finch serve as a moral compass in the novel, and how effective is he in challenging the injustices of Maycomb society?**
Examine Atticus's actions, beliefs, and parenting style. How does he model integrity and empathy, particularly during the trial of Tom Robinson?
- How does Boo Radley function as a symbol in the novel, and what does his character reveal about fear, misunderstanding, and compassion?**
Analyze how Boo is perceived by the children at the beginning of the novel versus how he is revealed by the end. What role does he play in the story's resolution, and how does his transformation (in the eyes of Scout and Jem) reinforce the novel's central themes?

READING WITHOUT THINKING IS NOTHING.
FOR A BOOK IS LESS IMPORTANT FOR
WHAT IT SAYS THAN FOR WHAT IT MAKES
YOU THINK.
- LOUIS L'AMOUR -



Example Rubric:

Category	4 - Excellent	3 - Proficient	2 - Developing	1 - Emerging
Literary Insight (5 pts)	Demonstrates deep understanding of the text with specific and thoughtful analysis	Shows solid understanding with some supporting examples and insights	Demonstrates basic understanding; analysis is vague or underdeveloped	Limited or inaccurate understanding; little to no textual analysis
Personal Reflection (5 pts)	Connects personally with the prompt in a meaningful, honest, and relevant way	Reflects on the prompt with clarity and some insight	Personal connection is superficial or lacks relevance	Lacks personal reflection or connection to the text
Textual Support (5 pts)	Uses well-chosen, specific references or examples from the novel to support ideas	Includes relevant textual support, though may lack depth or specificity	Limited or vague references; lacks strong connection to the argument	No textual evidence or examples to support analysis
Organization & Clarity (3 pts)	Response is clearly organized with logical flow and effective paragraphing or labeling	Mostly well-organized with few lapses in clarity	Some issues with structure or clarity; transitions may be weak	Poorly organized, difficult to follow, lacks coherence
Conventions (2 pts)	Few to no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation	Some minor errors that do not hinder understanding	Noticeable errors that distract from the content	Frequent errors that interfere with readability

Instructor Comments:

Student Self-Score: _____ / 20

Students may complete a brief self-assessment and justify their score

Student Comments:
