



2026-27 Summer Assignment: Grade 8 - English AA - Ms. Rampa

Welcome rising 8th graders! Please read the following books to help you become well prepared for fall quarter in English class. This will be your first grade of the school year. You will read **TWO** novels and write 5 one page letters to me about it. It will be worth 50 points.

Pick a Sequel/Read-a-like: You will pick a novel based on which book you liked best from last year and write 3 letters to me about it. One towards the beginning of the book, one in the middle and one at the end.

The Outsiders: That Was Then This Is Now by S.E. Hinton

Refugee: Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park

The Lord of the Flies: Wilder Girls by Rory Power

A classic novel of your choosing: Pick a classic novel from the ones listed below. Write 2 letters to me - one half way through and one at the end making connections and reflecting. This means I will be looking for 2 full pages of writing typed or handwritten. Use the questions and prompts for deep thinking on the back to inspire your writing.

Frankenstein by Mary Shelly

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Around the World in 80 Days by Jules Verne

Dracula by Bram Stoker

Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

Letters should NOT be summaries. They should be your opinions, reflections, and deep thinking.

Ideas for deep thinking...

Share thoughts/ opinions about characters or plot or topic. Share connections you have

Share some things the writer did well or some things you didn't like about the text. Share your questions or things you are wondering about.

More questions

- What are the characters like? (personality, motivations etc..)
- How your thinking is changing about characters or events
- Predictions
- Personal connections
- What do you think about how the author has written the text? (language, organization, character development, etc..)
- Do you think this is a good example of its genre?
- Why do you like it or not like it?
- Who do you think would really enjoy this text? Why?

MUST BE A LETTER!!! Start with "Dear Ms. Rampa," End with "Your Student, Firstname Lastname"

Use the sample letter and the template to help you.

****I will be looking for a total of 5 letters. So make a plan to read about 20 minutes a day and then sit down for 30 minutes and write a letter to me every other week this summer. If you do this, it should be easy to complete.***

Dear Class,

I really liked the book, Last Stop on Market Street. I like the way the book is written for kids and adults. The book tells the story of a young boy, CJ and his Nana that take a trip to the soup kitchen on the book. CJ complains about having to ride the bus and all of the things associated with the bus and city such as the noise, the dirt and the people. His grandmother helps him to see the city in a whole new light by helping him see the beauty and fun of the adventure.

One thing that I really liked was the way the author helps us to see the city in a whole new light. The grandmother always has something positive to say and always sees the happy or bright side of things. I like the way she points out that he would miss the bus driver, who takes out a coin magically from behind his ear. I also like how he gets to hear a man play guitar after he complains about not having an ipod. There is a sense of celebrity status in each of the characters that he creates. It seems that all have magical talents, which lends itself to the theme of recognizing the beauty around us. In a typical situation, these people would seem ordinary, but Matt De la Pena allows us to see people and the world differently through the eyes of the grandmother.

The description of the blind man on the bus is wonderful. She says that he sees with his ears and with his eyes. I thought this was a great way to help me think about a person who is blind. It captures how we can see people's abilities rather than their disabilities.

The pictures in the book seemed flat. I wasn't sure why it won the Caldecott Award for best pictures. There didn't seem to be a special style to me. I liked the way he used the symbol of a rainbow to change the mood of the poem. It seemed to be the turning point of the book for me. CJ was just starting to see things differently.

Sincerely,

Ms. Rampa