

Summer Reading Tips

A. Take the Pre-Reading seriously

- Take advantage of the opportunity to gather clues about what you will be reading
- Take the time to genuinely write about your thoughts, ideas, and prior knowledge to get your brain in motion to understand and think more clearly about what you read.
- Answering the pre-reading questions will lead to confidence as you read. The pre-reading is like a GPS that can help you get to where you need to be because you know what you're looking for.

B. Learn your reading rate for your fiction book so you can manage your time and finish

- The first time you read your book, set your timer/stopwatch on your phone for 30 minutes.
- Read, nonstop, until the time is up, then count the number of pages you read.
- Divide the number of pages you read into the total number of pages in the book.

Example: You read 14 pages in 30 minutes for a 250 page book. Divide 250 by 14, Approximately 18, 30-minute reading sessions are needed to complete the book. Reading rates usually increase as readers get used to the style and voice of the writer. However, not everyone reads at the same rate, and that's OK. Know your reading rate and make adjustments if needed.

C. Control your reading routine

- Know your summer schedule. Do you attend camps, play sports, have a job? Be sure you know when you are able to read during the day and work around your summer fun and responsibilities.
- Do not procrastinate. Choose to read on your own terms so
- Find a comfortable space to read, but not so comfortable that you will fall asleep.

D. Have a positive attitude

- A positive attitude=positive results.
- You will get out of the reading what you put into the reading. If you have a negative attitude...if you take short cuts...if you make the task a fight with your parents...if you see it as a chore or a punishment...then your reading and journal responses will not be done to your true potential.
- Choose a book that aligns with your interests and keep an open mind.

E. Honesty and authenticity will help you succeed in your journal writing.

- Most of the Big Questions will be applicable to all parts of your book. Simply write what you think makes sense and show your work by supporting your idea with text from the book
- Read genuinely and honestly. The internet is filled with responses for every book used in schools. Trust your own intelligence, common sense, and feelings to write responses.
- Avoid the temptation to cheat by using the internet, copying off your classmates, or using AI. If you play games and try to trick the teacher, you run the risk of losing that game along with the teacher's trust. Make a good first impression with your new teacher.

2026 Junior Summer Reading List

This summer you will be assigned one work of **fiction** and selections from *Touchstone Anthology of Creative Nonfiction* in preparation for your junior year English and religion classes.

Please review the list of novels below, selected based on them being centered around a young protagonist. Choose any novel from the list and then follow the attached directions for reading and writing in your journal.

Fiction (Choose ONE novel)

Copper Sun by Sharon Draper (historical fiction)

Assassin's Apprentice by Robin Hobb (fantasy)

Boys in the Valley by Phillip Fracasi (horror)

The Catcher in the Rye by JD Salinger (literary classic)

Scythe by Neal Schusterman (science fiction)

Room by Emma Donoghue (thriller)

Salvage the Bones by Jesmyn Ward (southern fiction)

True Grit by Charles Portis (western)

The Unseen World by Liz Moore (family drama)

Nonfiction (All juniors will use this book for the nonfiction assignment)

Touchstone Anthology of Creative Nonfiction.

Junior Summer Reading Journal Directions

FICTION PRE- READING DIRECTIONS:

Complete the work listed below ***BEFORE*** you begin reading your book. Respond to each prompt below in your summer reading journaling notebook.

1. Preview and Predict:

- Why did you pick this book?
- What do the title, the graphics, or the back cover tell you about the book?
- What are you expecting from your reading based on what you might have heard from others who have read it or movies that have been made about it?

2. Complete a Google search of the author's biography. Skim through the information you find and locate details about the following:

- where the author is from
- religious beliefs or cultural values associated with the author
- historical or political events that may have impacted the author's life
- pop culture impact from this book or other works by the author

3. Prior to reading your book, choose one Big Question from the list and write a short answer to the question based on what you've learned in life from your own experiences and observations.

READING JOURNAL:

After every 1/4 of the book, choose ONE Big Question from the list that applies best to the section of text you read. **For example**, *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper is 336 pages long. 336 divided by 4 is 84. So for every 84 pages, you would write a short response of 8-10 sentences using a Big Question. You may use the same Big Question more than once. You may also use a different Big Question for each section. Follow these steps for your response:

1. Select a Big Question and briefly summarize one interesting or important detail from your reading that led you to choose the Big Question.
2. Discuss what you can infer about the writer's message or purpose by examining how the Big Question applies to the events in the book.
3. Include text evidence from the book that supports your response about the Big Question.

Journal Response Heading Example:

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

Journal Response 1

Pages 1-81

NONFICTION PRE-READING DIRECTIONS:

All juniors will read a few essays from the collection *Touchstone Anthology of Creative Nonfiction*. "Selected by five hundred writers, English professors, and creative writing teachers from across the country, this collection includes only the most highly regarded nonfiction work published since 1970."

PRE-READING: Read the "Forward" by Lee Wiliford and the "Introduction" by Scott Russell Sanders and write a 2-3 paragraph response to the following prompt: What is your preference for reading, fiction or nonfiction? Why? What do Wiliford and Sanders have to say about the appeal of nonfiction? Why is it popular for readers and writers?

READING JOURNAL: Choose five selections from the book. Choose your selections carefully, if you begin reading a selection and don't enjoy it, move on to another. There are a wide range of options. For each selection you must create a journal entry.

Each journal entry should identify the title and author of the selection, for instance: "The Fourth State of Matter" by Jo Ann Beard. Then you should respond to the following prompts with 4-8 sentences for each response:

1. What is the main idea of the selection? What does the author want the reader to take away? What is interesting or important about this idea? How can it be applied to your life or the world today?
2. What is interesting about how the piece is written? Analyze the author's tone, style, diction, or anything else you find interesting about his or her writing.
3. What lessons can you take from the selection and apply to your own writing? How could you use syntax, punctuation, structure, tone, organization, transitions, or any other technique in a similar way to improve your own writing?

FICTION AND NONFICTION FINAL ASSESSMENTS: When you enter school in September, you will use the responses from your journal to complete final creative and formal assessments that will be assigned by your English teacher.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Trust yourself and your ability to do your own work. Please re-read the "Summer Reading Tips" regarding authenticity in your work. Make a good first impression.

Summer Reading Big Questions 2026

1. Are old ways the best ways?
2. Can allies be opponents?
3. Can we achieve equal rights?
4. Can appearances deceive?
5. Can first impressions be trusted?
6. Can ordinary people be heroes?
7. Can reporters always stay objective?
8. Can values be imposed?
9. Can we be alone and not lonely?
10. Can you be from two cultures at once?
11. Can you recover from tragedy?
12. Can your conscience mislead you?
13. Do the ends justify the means?
14. Do we set our own course?
15. Does everyone have a dark side?
16. Does fate control our lives?
17. Does knowledge come at a price?
18. How can nature inspire you?
19. How can people honor their heritage?
20. How can we achieve the impossible?
21. How can we change society?
22. How do expectations affect performance?
23. How good are you at judging people?
24. How has science changed our lives?
25. How important is culture?
26. How important is telling the truth?
27. How important is wealth?
28. Is curiosity a gift or a curse?
29. Is emotion stronger than reason?
30. Is fear our worst enemy?
31. Is it better to escape or face reality?
32. Is privacy an illusion?
33. Is revenge ever justified?
34. Is technology taking over?
35. Is the price of progress ever too high?
36. Is there dignity in silence?

37. Should religion be tied to politics?
38. Should you trust your instincts?
39. What are we entitled to?
40. What breeds terror?
41. What can we learn from stories?
42. What do we learn from experience?
43. What do we owe others?
44. What does a community owe its children?
45. What does it take to be a survivor?
46. What does one's name really mean?
47. What drives human behavior?
48. What if life had a reset button?
49. What is cowardice?
50. What is dignity?
51. What is our place in nature?
52. What is the role of a witness?
53. What keeps you on the edge of your seat?
54. What makes a great competitor?
55. What makes a setting sinister?
56. What makes someone feel like an outsider?
57. What responsibility comes from wealth?
58. What responsibility comes with power?
59. What should be sacrificed for justice?
60. When are the little things a big deal?
61. When do attitudes need adjusting?
62. When is a risk worth taking?
63. Where do people look for the truth?
64. Where do we get our values?
65. Which memories last?
66. Who are the victims of war?
67. Who has the right to rule?
68. Who really shapes society?
69. Why are we fascinated by the unknown?
70. Why do people break the rules?
71. Why do people fear change?
72. Why do people seek power?