

Grade 9 Honors Summer Reading

Summer 2025

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All incoming honors freshmen will read Ruta Sepetys' *I Must Betray You* and complete **15 journal entries**. We will use these entries as the basis of class discussion and writing activities when you return to school.

****You must submit these journal entries to me within the first two days of school in September****

In the first week of school, there will also be an assessment on the book. Students will receive an important excerpt from the text and use it to respond to a writing prompt.

Follow the assignment below; these are the guidelines I will use to grade your work. *(See the sample entry and rubric on the following pages.)*

The Assignment

1. In a standard-size journal/notebook, respond to your required reading in 15 well-developed entries that reflect a *close reading of the book's beginning, middle, & end*.
2. Choose a prompt from the list below to focus each entry; please do not use any prompt more than once per book. Write that prompt at the top of your journal page to make clear the focus of your entry.
3. Each entry must reflect the standards of good paragraph writing:
 - a. **A clear topic sentence, or focusing statement**, at the beginning of the paragraph;
 - b. **Thoughtful discussion** that reflects knowledge of the text and careful consideration of the subject;
 - c. **Specific evidence from the text**; *each entry must include at least one specific quotation with the page number in parentheses.****** Do not summarize the plot in your entries!**
4. **Each entry must consist of at least 8 well-developed sentences.**
5. **Journal entries must be handwritten (unless your IEP specifies otherwise).**

List of prompts for your reading response entries:

- What surprised me most was ...because ...
- I was confused by/focused ...
- I found the following quotation interesting ... because ...
- Describe the most interesting thing you learned from the book.
- Describe how you can use what you learned from this book in your own life.
- Describe any text features the author used and how they affected your reading experience.
- Describe anything or anyone you would like to know more about after reading the book. What about this person/event intrigued you? What more would you like to know?
- A situation in the book reminds me of something that happened to me or someone else because. . .
- The ideas or events in this book remind me of ideas or events in (another book, movies, news) because. . .
- I wish the author would change this part because. . .
- Describe how the author captured your interest or pulled you into the book.
- Describe new insights or understandings you have after reading the book.
- Does the title of the book have more than one meaning? If so, describe the different meanings.
- Write a letter to one of the people described or explained in the book.
- Write a letter to the author of the book with your questions and responses to his/her writing.
- Create your own prompt.

Sample Journal Entry

To Kill a Mockingbird Harper Lee

Entry #1: The main character wants/is...

The main character, Scout, is very smart for her age. In the first few chapters, she is only 6 or 7 but she acts older. When she starts school, she can already read and write. Her first grade teacher Miss Caroline is upset that she can. She says Scout's father taught her incorrectly. But Scout tells the reader that she figured it out herself, "reading was something that just came to me" (17). She says the housekeeper Calpurnia taught her to write to keep her out of trouble on rainy days. Scout also seems very aware of other people's feelings for a little kid, "Miss Caroline watched the class file out... I saw her sink down in her chair and bury her head in her arms. Had her conduct been more friendly toward me, I would have felt sorry for her" (22). I don't think most little kids would react that way to seeing their teacher upset or say something about her "conduct". Scout basically rationalizes why it is okay for her not to feel badly. All in all, Scout seems to sound and act older than she is. I wonder why?

Reading Response Journal Rubric

Score	Requirements	Ideas/content	Conventions
5	Journal consists of fifteen or more handwritten entries. Assignment represents a close reading of the whole book. Every entry contains a quotation and page number. Entries average 8 sentences (or more).	Journal demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the book. Responses show different kinds of thinking about the book: connecting, questioning, predicting, and analyzing. Responses are insightful, engaging, and supported with specific details from the book. Responses show evidence of deep engagement with the author's ideas	Writing is generally free of errors in punctuation, spelling, and usage. The entries are titled, numbered, and well-organized.
4	Journal consists of around 10 handwritten entries. Assignment represents a reading of the whole book. Most entries contain a quotation and page number. Entries average at least 8 sentences.	Journal demonstrates an understanding of the book. Responses may contain some plot summary, but show good thinking about the book. Responses as a whole show effort and are well developed yet to the point. Responses show evidence of engagement with the author's ideas and reference specific details from the book.	Writing demonstrates few errors in punctuation, spelling, and usage. The entries are titled and organized.
3	Journal consists of around 8 handwritten entries. Assignment represents most of the book. Some entries contain a quotation and page number. Every entry is at least 5 sentences.	Journal demonstrates basic understanding of the book. Responses are mostly plot summary with some attempts at thinking about the book. Responses as a whole show some effort and are somewhat developed; they may contain some digressions. Some responses show engagement with the author's ideas.	Writing demonstrates some errors in punctuation, spelling, and usage. There is an attempt at organization.
2	Journal consists of around 6 handwritten entries. Assignment represents part of the book. Few entries contain a quotation and page number. Entries average 4-5 sentences. Directions to handwrite journal may have been ignored.	Journal demonstrates limited understanding of the book and/or evidence of reading the book. Responses are all plot summary. Responses are undeveloped and/or contain irrelevant details and digressions. Responses show little evidence of engagement with the author's ideas	Writing demonstrates many errors in punctuation, spelling, usage The entries may not follow a logical order. The prompts are unclear.
1-0	Journal consists of fewer than five entries. Assignment represents little/no part of the book. Entry does not contain a quotation and page number. Directions to handwrite journal may have been ignored.	Journal demonstrates no understanding of the book and/or evidence of reading the book. Responses consist of plot summary. Responses show no thought or effort and are undeveloped. Responses show no evidence of engagement with the author's ideas	Grammatical and mechanical errors seriously interfere with the reader's understanding. There is little evidence of organization.
	X 2 =	X 3 =	X 1 =