

8th Grade Summer Reading List – GT Academy

All students will read **3 TOTAL books, ONE from each of the 3 categories below:**

Category 1

The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster

OR

The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis

OR

The Pearl by John Steinbeck

OR

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle

Category 2

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

OR

White Fang by Jack London

OR

The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton

OR

War of the Worlds by H. G. Wells

OR

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls

OR

Dragonwings by Lawrence Yep

OR

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor

Category 3

Other Side of the Sky: A Memoir by Farah Ahmedi and Timim Ansary

OR

Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story by Ben Carson and Cecil Murphey

OR

Any other contemporary memoir of comparable merit that you have not read prior to receiving this assignment.

Summer Reading Activity

All students should keep ONE dialectical journal with appropriate information from EACH of the 3 books they chose formatted exactly according to the *Setting Up Your Dialectical Journal* instructions below. **Students should bring this dialectical journal with them, COMPLETED, to the first day of 8th grade class.** A rubric is posted on the next page along with the requirements to give students guidance, but this does not necessarily mean the journal itself will be graded. Regardless of whether or not there is a specific grade on the journal, it will provide students an invaluable resource when preparing for the summer reading timed-writing and quizzes in their first few weeks of class and a valuable foundation for discussion at the beginning of the year.

Setting Up Your Dialectical Journal

In **ONE** composition book, **create 5 sections**, one for each of the literary devices listed below (archetype, imagery, mood/atmosphere, unique narrative perspective, and theme). Leave about 3 - 4 blank pages in each section (You may not use it all, but it is better to have the space). In other words, you will have one section for archetype, one section for imagery, etc. **Do NOT make a separate section for each book you read.** All examples of archetype from any of the books you choose to read will all go in the one “Archetype” section. **Create 2 columns on every page**, one for quotes and one for responding to the quote. Every time you enter a quote, you will enter a detailed, concise response. Quotes¹ should relate to examples/observations about the following literary devices and students should **get between 3 – 5 strong examples of EACH device** in their journals (NOT 3 – 5 from each book, but altogether). **Always put the page number after each quote in parenthesis. Example: (69)**

How to Annotate and Respond to Each Required Literary Device

1) Archetype

- a. In the Quote column, quote a brief description of a character/environment or a character’s thoughts/actions that you feel bring out a particular archetype in literature.
- b. In the Response column, explain specifically which archetype the quote brings out and how specifically the quote shows this archetype.

2) Imagery

- a. In the Quote column, quote a brief section of text that shows vivid imagery.
- b. In the Response column, explain what effect that imagery has on the meaning of the text (a.k.a. What kind of scene/mood does it set, idea does it emphasize, or character trait does it reveal?)

3) Specific Language That Sets the Mood/Atmosphere

- a. Find a section of maybe a few paragraphs and in the Quote column, quote individual words/phrases within the section that bring out the mood. List all the applicable individual words/phrases within the paragraphs as one entry with commas separating them.
- b. In the Response column, identify exactly what mood the words/phrases bring out and why/how they do it. Don’t respond to each individual word, but the meaning they all create as a whole.

4) Unique Narrative Perspective

- a. In the Quote column, quote places where you are able to see, feel, or understand things uniquely because of the point-of-view or the particular person/thing telling the story. It could be a character acting in a unique way or a unique way the author is telling the story that has an impact on the reader.
- b. In the Response column, explain what the unique perspective is that the quoted words show. If you are identifying a unique point-of-view, it is not enough to just say 2nd person or 3rd person. You must also explain specifically how the perspective is unique and the impact it has on the story.

5) Theme

- a. In the Quote column, find short quotes that you feel imply the theme of the work as a whole or a particular section of the work.
- b. In the Response column, explain how the quote implies the theme using specific details from the text.

¹ Quotes are words copied directly from the text (can be narration or dialogue).

Skill	Not Meeting Standard	Progressing	Proficient	Exemplary
Dialectical Journal	<p>The student evaluates material so <u>inconsistently</u> that it is impossible to determine a meaningful opinion or may not have identified any specific examples from the text to support opinions.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p><u>The journal is extremely unorganized, which halts the understanding of the student's thought process.</u> The teacher never truly is able to gain insight into the student's thought process while reading.</p>	<p>The student evaluates material <u>inconsistently</u> or may not have identified enough specific examples from the text to support opinions.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p><u>Some teacher inferences may be needed</u> in order to give the teacher insight into the student's thought process while reading.</p> <p>And/OR</p> <p><u>The journal is somewhat unorganized, which requires significant effort on the teacher's part to sort through in order to gain a meaningful understanding of the student's thought process.</u></p>	<p>The student evaluates material <u>competently, but not comprehensively.</u> Overall, the student is <u>able to communicate effectively with specific comments about the text</u></p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>Student may have written a little too much or too little for the journal to be completely effective.</p>	<p>The student evaluates material <u>comprehensively with insight,</u> giving the teacher insight into the student's thought process while reading.</p>

Summer Reading Rationale and Supporting Information

In an effort to give students a diversified, meaningful summer reading experience, the list has been separated into 3 related thematic pairs: (1) Allegorical, (2) Constraints, and (3) Overcoming Obstacles. By arranging the list this way, students are provided a choice between multiple books in each section with a variety of culturally diverse protagonists and reading levels, while still preparing for meaningful discussion on the broader themes/literary devices regardless of their choice.

In the first section, *The Phantom Tollbooth* is an allegory about the acquisition of knowledge; *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* is an allegory centered on the key tenants of the Christian faith; *The Pearl* is an allegory of oppression/greed; and *A Wrinkle in Time* is an allegory of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In the second section, *White Fang*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *War of the Worlds*, *The Outsiders*, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *Dragonwings*, and *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* all deal with either natural or social rules governing our behavior, connecting as the practical application of the broader conceptual allegorical frameworks from the first section.

In the final section, *Gifted Hands* and *Other Side of the Sky* both show the struggle to overcome obstacles. They connect to the other groups, showing how, when faced with obstacles in society, they can be overcome in a positive way. These two books are also memoirs instead of fiction, adding a new style dimension to the list, as well as being contemporary while the others are more standard classics in curriculum nationwide.

Background Research Recommendation for Individual Novels

It is highly recommended that before reading any of the selections on the list that students use the internet to research background information on the content to determine a historical context and gain perspective on the content before beginning to read or even making a choice to start reading. Many students in the past have complained about a book on the list and we have asked them, "Why didn't you pick something else if you didn't like it?" Their nearly identical answer is always, "Well, I started it and I didn't want to start another one." **By doing a small amount of research up front and going to a book store and reading the first few pages of each book, students are much more likely to pick a book that is at an appropriate reading level and that will interest them.**