

English 8 novels for 2024-2025

Below is the novel list for the 2024-2025 school year. The first three are the novels approved for summer reading. Students must select **ONE** of the novels from that list to read **AND** complete their summer reading assignment. The other two novels are required of all students and we will read them later in the year. Students must go ahead and purchase these two novels as they will be required to be turned in to me by August 30st. I have found that by requiring the students to have their novels at the beginning of the year, reduces the chances of them getting lost or misplaced. Please write their names, clearly, on the outside of the novels. I will have labels and markers available for them to do so in class, if needed.

For the school year novels, please purchase the editions listed below when possible. It is difficult for students to locate reading passages we use in class when there are so many different editions. Time spent searching for the reading passages takes up a great deal of class time. When we all have the same edition, then I can help them locate the sections we are examining more quickly in class. If you have trouble locating a specific edition, please let me know. I have searched each of these on three different online bookseller sites and have found them to be plentiful in number. The ISBN-13 number has been included for your reference.

English 8 Summer Reading Choices – Students will select ONE of the novels from this list to read AND complete the summer reading assignment.

1. *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie
2. *The Wednesday Wars* by Gary D. Schmitt
3. *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

School Year Novels – All students are required to purchase these books and must be turned in to the teacher by August 31st.

1. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain (*) 978-0486400778
2. *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien 978-0547928227

*Be careful purchasing this novel because there are many editions out there for *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. We use an unabridged edition. Your novel should have a Preface, 35 chapters, and a Conclusion.

English 8 Summer Reading Novel Summaries

Students will **select ONE** of the novels from this list to read AND complete the summer reading assignment before the first day of school.

***The Wednesday Wars* by Gary D. Schmitt**

Historical Fiction, Realistic Fiction, Humor

This story is a humorous and compelling story about a teenage boy's mishaps and misadventures over the course of the 1967–68 school year in Long Island, New York. Holling Hoodhood, a seventh-grader at Camillo Junior High, must spend Wednesday afternoons with his teacher, Mrs. Baker, while the rest of the class has religious instruction. Mrs. Baker doesn't like Holling—he's sure of it. Why else would she make him read the plays of William Shakespeare outside class?

***Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie**

Fiction, Murder Mystery, Crime Novel

In this story it is just after midnight and a snowdrift stops the Orient Express in its tracks. By the time morning arrives the train is one passenger fewer. An American tycoon lies dead in his compartment, stabbed a dozen times, his door locked from the inside. The famous detective, Hercule Poirot, must work quickly to identify the murderer before he or she decides to strike again.

***The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton**

Realistic Fiction, Historical Fiction, Teen Fiction

Ponyboy Curtis is a good-natured teen who loves books and movies. He's also an orphan whose two older brothers and street-smart friends guard and protect him. This story is about two weeks in the life of a 14-year-old boy. The novel tells of his struggles with right and wrong in a society in which he believes that he is an outsider.

8th Grade English Summer Reading Assignment

****Write in blue/black ink (legibly) or type using Times New Roman 12 pt font for all assignments****

You will read the novel you select and complete the following assignments. You will complete the assignments as described below. Be prepared to discuss this novel the first day of school and expect a reading comprehension assessment over the novel in the first week.

Part I – Read with a pencil. While you read, underline sections of the texts that you do not understand. Circle words you do not know; write comments and questions in the margins. Think about the text while you are reading. This will help you as you work on the following tasks and as you participate in classroom discussion.

Part II – You have a choice of which assignment to complete. Read through the options carefully and choose the option you feel you are best suited to score well.

Option I – Folder Project. (100 pts total) Choose any folder or envelope (two pockets, manila, mailing, etc.) to represent your learning and understanding of the novel. The folder does not matter but your inside items (see below) must fit inside.

The Outside. Decorate the folder with details and themes found in the book (25 pts.). Your name and class period must show clearly on the outside.

The Inside. The inside of the folder must include the following materials pertaining to the book:

1. **Vocabulary (25 pts.)** – While you are reading, create a 10-word glossary of unfamiliar words from the book and a definition for each word. Include the page number of where the word can be found. Do not take more than two words from each chapter.
2. **Symbolism (25 pts.)** – Symbolism is a literary device that uses symbols (concrete) to represent something beyond the literal meaning (abstract). Identify two examples of symbolism in the novel. Select two objects (concrete) to represent symbolism (symbolism) from the book. In two paragraphs (one to explain each object), explain what the object is, why you chose it, and what it represents in the book.
3. **Theme (25 pts.)** – Identify a theme from the novel. Identify that theme and write a paragraph explaining your theme, in detail, using textual evidences to support your theme.
4. **Submitting this project** – You will turn this folder in on the first day of school, August 16th.

Option II – Movie Project. (100 pts) Using iMovie, Movie Maker, or Adobe Spark Video, students will create a short film to represent their learning and understanding of the novel they choose. Students will create and film a 2 to 5-minute video based on the book. You may enlist friends and family members to be actors in your film but they may not help you with your film's design, captions, or connections to the novel. Your original film must include visual and audio elements. Visual element (what is seen) options are video, still images, charts/maps and text. Audio element (what is heard) options are dialogue, voiceover, background music, and sound effects. Using these elements, your video must include the following requirements:

1. **Vocabulary** – You should identify and define at least three unfamiliar vocabulary words found in the novel. Each word must come from a different chapter. You can also use text in the video to identify and define the word. Include the chapter where the word is located.
2. **Symbolism** – Identify symbolism from the novel. Symbolism is a literary device that uses symbols (concrete) to represent something beyond the literal meaning (abstract). Identify two examples of symbolism in the novel. Select two objects (concrete) to represent symbolism (symbolism) from the book. Your video should identify these two objects, why you chose it, and what it represents in the book. You can use any of the visual and/or audio elements to do accomplish this requirement.
3. **Theme** - Identify a theme from the novel. This theme can be represented throughout the video or explain explicitly using visual and/or audio elements.

4. **Author's Choice** - You may use images or acting that depict scenes from the book, include another symbolism, additional vocabulary, or other connections to the novel. You can use text and any of the visual and/or audio elements to enhance your video.
5. **Submitting this project** – You must email me your video as an attachment. You must include your name and class period so that I may view them to score their project. This must be emailed to me between Aug. 1st and before the first day of school, August 14th. Email to: jsanders@lexingtonchristian.org

Vocabulary Definitions to Assist in Summer Reading

THEME: A main idea that spans throughout the story and can be applied to most people's thoughts and actions. It is not specific to the characters in the story. For example, a main theme in J. R. R. Tolkien's novel, *The Hobbit*, is the devastating effects of greed. Once Smaug has been killed, Thorin Oakenshield has enough gold in front of him to "last 100 lifetimes" and yet he still wants more. He is even willing to go to war, and it is war that teaches Thorin that while gold is valuable, friendship is priceless.

SYMBOL/SYMBOLISM: Symbolism is a literary device that uses symbols (concrete) to represent something beyond the literal meaning (abstract). For example, in J. R. R. Tolkien's novel, *The Hobbit*, the Arkenstone symbolizes the good 'ole days of peace—a time when Thorin's ancestors were at one with nature and the species of Middle Earth. A time when Middle Earth lived in harmony. Thorin is desperate to keep the Arkenstone, and ultimately it is the very thing that sends Thorin into war.