



CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
1001 Fort Crook Road North, Suite 200
Bellevue, NE 68005



June 2, 2025

Dear Middle School Parents (8th Grade),

An important part of our middle school is the summer reading program. Reading is an essential life skill. Therefore, CCS wants to help your student maintain their current reading abilities rather than lose them over the summer months. Continuing to read during the summer will further develop fluency, broaden students reading comprehension, and keep their minds engaged.

In preparing for the upcoming school year in our middle school program, Cornerstone requires all students entering grades 6-8 to read and complete a project over a book selected from the summer reading list. These books have been chosen to prepare your student for literary studies in the upcoming school year. All the books are historical fiction and cover topics or countries that will be studied in history class. Below are the requirements for 8th grade.

Students must read a book from the appropriate grade's summer reading list and prepare the grade-appropriate assignment. This assignment is **due on Wednesday, August 27, 2025. The assignment will be graded.** Attached you will find the requirements and format for your student's assignment. In addition to reading a book for the *assignment*, students need to read a book from the discussion reading list as well. Students will be put into literature circles in the early part of the school year, and readers need to be able to discuss elements or answer questions about the characters of story they read from the list. **Your student will read two books total but will not complete an assignment on the discussion book.**

If your student has already read stories on either of the lists, it is all right for them to re-read one. Research tells us that when we re-read a story, we can catch foreshadowing that we missed the first time, catch hidden meaning, and even missed plot themes. Re-reading is a very worthy exercise.

You can find these books at your local library, on amazon or other online websites. Thank you for encouraging your student to read over the summer and continue to build their reading skills. I encourage you to read these books alongside your student. Doing this can provide gratifying discussion opportunities for you and your student. Enjoy your summer!

Blessings,

Miss Dick and Mrs. Wegner

8th Grade

Discussion Books: *Be prepared for a class discussion in August.*

- Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt
- The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba
- The Seventh Most Important Thing* by Shelley Pearsall
- Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus* by Dusti Bowling

Please select a discussion book that is different from what you chose in previous years.

Reading List for Book Assignment List: (choose one)

- The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank
- Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes
- Unbroken (Young Adult Version)* by Laura Hillenbrand
- Ashes of Roses* by Mary Jane Auch

Book Assignment Instructions on the above book selection

You will be completing a Response to Literature, answering the provided essay question for the novel you chose. Please answer the question that corresponds with the novel you read.

Grading Rubric:

Response to Literature Rubric

Performance	Inadequate 1	Developing 2	Adequate 3	Accomplished 4	Mastery 5
Introduction + claim (x2) ___/10	Lacks an introduction and any organizing elements of an introduction; fails to address the claim	Undeveloped introduction with poor or insufficient overview of the texts; weak, unfinished, or puzzling claim	Simple but hackneyed opening; introduction and summary of main texts included; clear claim and simple overview of main points	Convincing opening; vibrant overview of texts; clear, rational claim	Innovative, appealing opening; convincing summary of texts; well-written, detailed, engaging claim
Evidence (x3) ___/15	Evidence is not present in essay	Evidence is broad and may not always be focused on the prompt and claim	Precise evidence with occasional gaps in focus	Substantial and precise evidence; evidence is attentive in supporting the claim; any quotes are unified into body paragraphs	Captivating and evocative evidence that is tightly focused on supporting the claim and premises; evidence/quotes are effortlessly combined with the justification
Justification (x3) ___/15	No justification of examples; pure summary of text	Little or insufficient discussion of meaning of or connection to evidence	Establishes ability to justify and connect evidence, but justification is evident, petty, banal, or vague	Provides thoughtful, strong justification of evidence with occasional lapses	Provides sharp justification that explores profounder meaning between all components
Organization (x1) ___/5	No organizational elements of an essay exist	Inadequate organization; illogical paragraph division	Somewhat clear organization, but body paragraphs and transitions are irregular; conclusion may be missing	Clear organization and logic; decent transitions; nominal irregularity in paragraph focus and structure; conclusion exists, but it is basic	Flawless, rational, engaging organization with methodical development of ideas; sophisticated, lucid transitions; well-structured, concentrated paragraphs; conclusion displays clever synthesis of thoughts
Mechanics and Format (x1) ___/5	Elements of spelling, grammar, and punctuation are misunderstood	Substantial and confusing spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors that sometimes hinder ideas; constant error patterns	Errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation, but basic ideas are clear; may have one error in formatting	Infrequent, trivial errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar, but ideas are unblemished; observes the formatting guidelines	Few or no errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar; varied array of sentence construction and vocabulary; observes the formatting guidelines

_____ / 50 Teacher Comments:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Evidence Based Writing Format

Directions: Utilize this handout to help you better understand Evidence Based Writing. This handout will also help you as you prepare to write your summer reading essay. On the following pages, you are given an example of a quality essay.

Introductory Paragraph

TAG: The first sentence or two should include a TAG (title, author, genre).

Summary: The next 2-3 sentences should summarize the text you will be writing about.

Claim: The last sentence of your introductory paragraph should be your claim. Essentially, this sentence states your basic answer to the question from the prompt or whatever you are trying to prove.

Body Paragraphs

Premise: The first sentence of each body paragraph should state a REASON that supports your claim.

Evidence: Before you cite your evidence from the text, you must introduce it. Then include facts or details from the text that support your claim.

Justification: This section should be at least 2-3 sentences explaining the evidence that you chose and WHY it supports your claim.

Concluding Sentence: This sentence should summarize and wrap up each body paragraph.

Concluding Paragraph

Restate Your Claim: Using different words from the introductory paragraph, restate your claim.

Summarize Your Evidence: Do not introduce any new evidence here.

Concluding Sentence: Write one final sentence that leaves the reader with no further questions.

Introducing a Quote from the Text

Use introductory words to introduce a quote from the text (include the comma!). These can include:

- According to the author,
- According to the text,
- The author states,
- The authors illustrates,

Using Proper Quotation Marks and Punctuation

- Quotation marks NEED to come at the beginning and end of the quote.
- The quote must be the EXACT words from the text.
- After the quote, use parentheses to cite the author's last name and page number.
- The period goes after the parentheses.
 - Example: The author describes Harry as having, "a thin face, knobbly knees, black hair, and bright green eyes" (Rowling 1).

**** The original essay prompt was: "Based on your reading and discussion of 'Nothing Gold Can Stay,' what do you think Frost's message about impermanence might be?" ****

Robert Dawson

Mrs. Plaine

English 7

10 November 2015

"Nothing Gold Can Stay" Response to Literature

Robert Frost's melancholy, yet inspiring, poem, "Nothing Gold Can Stay" (TAG) holds a somber, yet honest tone toward a universal concept that holds true to everyone. In the poem, the speaker explores the idea of impermanence through the use of nature as an extended metaphor to definitively drive his point home for the reader. (SUMMARY) The speaker wants the reader to gain a deep understanding that nothing in this life lasts forever - that impermanence is an idea and a concept that holds true for everyone at any place in life. And it is through this allusion to impermanence that the reader should also feel a sense of inspiration - one that forces him or her to enjoy the precious moments allotted to humankind while on earth. (CLAIM)

Right from the outset of the poem, (TRANSITION) the speaker makes reference to this notion of impermanence. It is as though the speaker does not want to leave any ambiguity in his words or in what his message is (PREMISE) by immediately proclaiming, (INTRODUCTION OF EVIDENCE) "Nature's first green is gold, / Her hardest hue to hold" (Frost 1-2). (EVIDENCE) Instantly, in these two lines, the speaker has alluded to the fact that this "gold" of nature is the most difficult hue to hold onto. The choice of the term "gold" also forces the reader to ponder that the speaker is making mention of something precious or worth holding on to. However, in this case, this gold hue is something that is transient, and impermanent, something that must be treasured while given the opportunity to. Thus, Frost is imparting on the reader a

vastly important message: that nothing lasts forever, and one must treasure each moment with items or people of precious and important value. **(JUSTIFICATION)**

Most importantly though to Frost's message regarding impermanence, **(TRANSITION)** is when the speaker makes an explicit reference in the poem. **(PREMISE)** The final line of the poem clearly illustrates the mortality of everything in life; **(INTRODUCTION OF EVIDENCE)** "Nothing gold can stay" (Frost 8). **(EVIDENCE)** The word choice here should not go unnoticed. Frost clearly chose to use the term "nothing" to indicate that this impermanence, that the transience of life, becomes inescapable for *everyone* and *everything*. This is an all-encompassing, universal truth regarding life. Despite the somewhat bleak and forlorn message, there is also a positive and hopeful message hidden in the text. One must read this and not feel dejected. Instead, one must read this and use Frost's message as a catalyst to enjoy each fleeting moment in life. To live a life where "carpe diem" oozes through one's pores. In brief, despite the initially perceived sadness of impermanence in this poem, Frost hopes to inspire his readers to live their life to the fullest because truly, nothing gold *can* stay. **(JUSTIFICATION)**

In closing, Frost's message regarding impermanence is that it should not be perceived in a negative, disheartening light. **(RESTATEMENT OF CLAIM)** Instead, coming to understand and grasp this concept of impermanence, allows one to fully immerse himself or herself into life and truly *live* in the moment. **(SUMMARY OF IDEAS)** Because of this underlying allusion to not taking any moment for granted, Frost's message is actually a message of hope and enlightenment, forcing the reader to cherish *everyone* and *everything* that is precious to him or her in this life. **(CONCLUDING THOUGHT)**

Essay Questions:

Answer the question for the novel you chose and use the graphic organizers below to organize your information and write your rough draft. Once edits have been made, type your final draft in Word and submit to Teams.

MLA format: 12-point font, double-spaced, Times New Roman or Arial

Heading justified to the left

Header on the right:

Full name

Last name <#>

Teacher

Class

Date

If you read *Johnny Tremain*:

What are the major influences in his life that facilitated the change in Johnny's character? Use evidence from the text to explain.

If you read *The Diary of Anne Frank*:

Dealing with adversity is no easy task; however, some people seem to be able to find ways to cope with their hardships. How did Anne and the others deal with adversity during their time in the annex? Use evidence from the text to support your reasoning.

If you read *Ashes of Roses*:

How does Rose's journey as an Irish immigrant give insight into the experiences of other immigrants during that period of history? Use evidence from the text to support your claim.

If you read *Unbroken*:

How do Louis Zamperini's experiences during WWII highlight the strength of the human spirit and the ability to overcome extreme adversity? Use evidence from the text to explain your reasoning.

If you read *Woods Runner*:

Is killing another ever justified? What would Samuel say about this? Use evidence from the text to explain why or why not and how what he would say.

Assignment:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Evidence Tracker

Directions: Use this graphic organizer to help you track evidence from your summer reading book to prepare you for the essay you'll be writing. Make sure to always include the page from the text when using a quote or summarizing a section.

Title of Literary Work

Essay Question:

Evidence (in your own words)	Quote from the text (include page #)	Justify/Analyze/Evaluate

Name: _____

Date: _____

Response to Literature Graphic Organizer

Summer Reading Assignment

Directions: Feel free to use this graphic organizer to help you prepare for the final version of your essay.

Introductory Paragraph

Write a **TAG** (title, author, genre) or **HOOK** and brief **summary** for the piece you read.

(INDENT) _____

Write a **claim or thesis statement**, stating your answer to the question. Don't say **WHY** here.

*****Everything on this page goes in your introduction paragraph.***

Name: _____

Date: _____

Response to Literature Graphic Organizer

Summer Reading Assignment

Body Paragraph #1

Write the first reason (premise) for your claim or thesis.

(INDENT) _____

Introduce your evidence and include a quote from the text that supports your claim. Don't forget quotation marks.

Circle one: According to the text, The author states, The author writes, According to the author,

Justify your evidence by writing 2-3 sentences that explain why the quote you chose from the piece of literature supports your claim/premise.

*****Everything on this page goes in your first body paragraph.***

Name: _____

Date: _____

Response to Literature Graphic Organizer

Summer Reading Assignment

Body Paragraph #2

Write the **second reason (premise)** for your claim or thesis.

(INDENT) _____

Introduce your evidence and include a **quote** from the text that supports your claim. Don't forget quotation marks.

Circle one: According to the text, The author states, The author writes, According to the author,

Justify your evidence by writing 2-3 sentences that explain why the quote you chose from the piece of literature supports your claim/premise.

*****Everything on this page goes in your second body paragraph.***

Name: _____

Date: _____

Response to Literature Graphic Organizer

Summer Reading Assignment

Body Paragraph #3

Write the **third reason (premise)** for your claim or thesis.

(INDENT) _____

Introduce your evidence and include a **quote** from the text that supports your claim. Don't forget quotation marks.

Circle one: According to the text, The author states, The author writes, According to the author,

Justify your evidence by writing 2-3 sentences that explain why the quote you chose from the piece of literature supports your claim/premise.

*****Everything on this page goes in your third body paragraph.***

Name: _____

Date: _____

Response to Literature Graphic Organizer

Summer Reading Assignment

Conclusion Paragraph

Use a **transition word** to show the reader they have arrived at your conclusion, and then **restate your claim**, trying to use different words than your original claim.

Circle one: In conclusion, Thus, In the end, To conclude, Finally,

(INDENT) _____

Summarize your evidence. Don't introduce any new evidence here. Simply point out one more time how the quote you chose proves your claim is true.

Write a **concluding sentence** that offers the reader some final insight (e.g., a lesson learned).

*****Everything on this page goes in your concluding paragraph.***