



SUMMER READING 2016
INCOMING EIGHTH GRADERS
DUE: THE FIRST MONDAY OF CLASSES

In eighth grade, we will focus on preparing you for the kind of writing you will have to do in high school. For each of the following texts, you will annotate and write a thesis statement. A thesis statement is “a single sentence that formulates both your topic and your point of view. In a sense, the thesis statement is your answer to the central question or problem you have raised.” (*MLA Handbook for Writers*) The thesis statement is an argument; it should be based on your perspective. It is always a good idea to look at your thesis statement and ask yourself, “Is this something that can be debated?” If your thesis statement cannot be argued, it may be a factual statement instead of an argument.

House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

Cisneros, a Mexican-American author, writes about the coming-of-age story for a young girl named Esperanza who moves into a new neighborhood. Her story is told through deceptively simple vignettes that describe individual experiences that add up to reveal the strong, independent woman residing within Esperanza.

- Read the book.
- Annotate (highlight passages or underline passages, write notes in the margins) for the topic of femininity.
- Write a thesis statement about the topic, stating what you think Cisneros is trying to say about the characteristics of a strong woman.

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

A group of British schoolboys find themselves trapped on an island in the middle of the ocean. The boys resolve to build their own civilization, but can they overcome the wilderness and their own darkness? This classic is filled with rich symbolism and hidden meaning.

- Read the book.
- Annotate (highlight or underline passages, write notes in the margins) for the following things: the conch; the Beast; and Piggy and Simon.
- Write a thesis statement stating what you think one of these symbols represents in the book and why you think that.

True Grit by Charles Portis

True Grit describes the adventures and hardships encountered by young Mattie Ross, a girl who seeks revenge for her father’s murder after the American Civil War. She is aided in her journey by two lawmen, and, together, they pursue outlaws across the American wilderness.

- Read the book.
- Annotate (highlight or underline passages, write notes in the margins) for the character of Rooster Cogburn.
- Write a thesis statement stating whether or not you believe Rooster Cogburn is an “honorable” character.

Choose one other book that you want to read just for fun!