

Grade 8

Summer Reading 2025 for Rising **8th** Graders

Rising eighth graders will read *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton.

When we return to school, we will be discussing the assigned fiction book. Be prepared for our discussion by reviewing the following questions. You will want to take notes to better engage in your reading and our follow-up discussion in class. These are your books. You may annotate the text (write in the margins) or use sticky notes to record your thinking.

1. Be able to summarize the text in three to five sentences.
2. What would you change in this book if you had written it?
3. Share a favorite quote from the book. Why did this quote stand out to you?
4. Which character in the book would you most like to meet? Give at least two reasons.

We will discuss the book at length and you will be assessed on the book.

In addition to reading *The Outsiders*, you will also be completing four (4) additional multiple choice practice worksheets designed to help you achieve success on any standardized test. You are to read the passage, highlight, underline, markup, annotate as you wish, and answer the questions that follow. Bring these worksheets with you to school for credit the first week of school where we will discuss. This will be counted as part of class discussion. Failure to complete these worksheets will result in loss of points for the first week of school.

READING COMPREHENSION PRACTICE – POETRY

Directions: Below you will find a poem in two stanzas. Read thoughtfully. Then, circle the *best* answer for each question. Don't forget to go back and check textual evidence to help guide your thinking.

1 My cat! Oh, cat! You beautiful cat!
 Look at your nose,
 It's as cute as your toes!
 From your whiskers to your feet,
 Your jovial face I happily greet
 As reliable as the sun,
 You make me rise in my bed
 With a nuzzle of your head
 Against my cheek
 Every day of the week!
 That's how I know that it's time to awake
 And give you food and make myself pancakes!

2 Every day is a familiar story
 Where you play a hero in all of your glory,
 Battling shadow monsters in the dark of night,
 Shredding paper villains with all of your might!
 You are a bold, brazen knight indeed,
 Valiant and agile, as strong as a steed!
 Your body is strong and your mind is wise,
 I see a world of love when I look in your eyes.
 My cat, my cat, my infallible cat,
 You are far better than any bear, tiger, or rat!
 Thank you, thank you, for all that you do,
 And thank you, THANK YOU, for being you!

1. The *best* title for this poem would be
 - a. A Familiar Story
 - b. A Cat's Glory
 - c. A Knight's Tale
 - d. Mind Over Body
2. The phrase "battling shadow monsters" probably means
 - a. the cat runs around noisily at night
 - b. the cat's home is haunted
 - c. the monsters appear only at night
 - d. the narrator is scared of the dark
3. What seems to be the poet's mood?
 - a. gloomy
 - b. apathetic
 - c. celebratory
 - d. sympathetic
4. Why is the cat like the sun?
 - a. the cat has a warm body
 - b. the cat wakes the narrator up at the same time every day
 - c. the cat has a bright personality
 - d. the cat prefers sunny days

5. What is the conclusion of the poem?
 - a. the narrator is fed up with the cat
 - b. animals and humans can be best friends
 - c. the cat feels like he needs to protect the narrator
 - d. even though the cat can be destructive, the narrator loves the cat very much
6. Which of the following would the poet probably agree with?
 - a. the domestication of animals is unethical
 - b. cats are better than dogs
 - c. pets usually follow a routine
 - d. all animals are hilarious
7. The poet does *not* compare the cat to a
 - a. sun
 - b. knight
 - c. hero
 - d. heart

Reading Comprehension

A child was standing on a street-corner. He leaned with one shoulder against a high board-fence and swayed the other to and fro, the while kicking carelessly at the gravel. Sunshine beat upon the cobbles, and a lazy summer wind raised yellow dust which trailed in clouds down the avenue. Clattering trucks moved with indistinctness through it. The child stood dreamily gazing. After a time, a little dark-brown dog came trotting with an intent air down the sidewalk. A short rope was dragging from his neck. Occasionally he trod upon the end of it and stumbled.

He stopped opposite the child, and the two regarded each other. The dog hesitated for a moment, but presently he made some little advances with his tail. The child put out his hand and called him. In an apologetic manner the dog came close, and the two had an interchange of friendly patings and waggles. The dog became more enthusiastic with each moment of the interview, until with his gleeful caperings he threatened to overturn the child.

- From *A Dark Brown Dog* by Stephen Crane

1. Who is the narrator of this passage?
 - a. the dog
 - b. the child
 - c. Stephen Crane
 - d. unknown
2. The dog's mood in this story could be described as
 - a. affable
 - b. combative
 - c. avoidant
 - d. sinister
3. The narrator probably believes ____
 - a. children shouldn't be left alone to hang out on the street
 - b. stray animals are a threat to children
 - c. big dogs are better than small dogs
 - d. humans and animals can have strong connections
4. The author wrote this story to
 - a. create a sense of suspense
 - b. warn readers of the dangers of stray animals
 - c. remind us to be kind to animals
 - d. describe how the child and the dog first met each other
5. The word swayed as underlined and used in this passage, most nearly means
 - a. power
 - b. influence
 - c. move from side to side
 - d. hit against
6. What probably happened next in the story?
 - a. the child stands in a more sturdy way so as not to fall over
 - b. the dog cowers in fear of the child
 - c. the dog bites the child
 - d. the narrator rescues the child
7. The word gleeful as underlined and used in this passage, most nearly means
 - a. aggressive
 - b. brave
 - c. jovial
 - d. brazen
8. From this passage we can infer that
 - a. the dog already belonged to someone
 - b. the dog was dangerous
 - c. the child was in a hurry
 - d. the child already had a dog at home

Reading Comprehension: Non-Fiction

The Colosseum, an ancient stadium in the center of Rome, has seen many battles throughout history. In ancient Rome, professional fighters called gladiators would delight vast audiences by battling to the death. As many as 80,000 Romans would pack inside to watch these gory matches and see who would reign as victor and who would be disgraced by defeat.

When gladiators weren't battling one another, they went head-to-head with even more brazen opponents: lions, tigers, and even the occasional rhino. Attempting to elude these beasts was considered cowardly and punishable by death. Gladiators were forced to fight their animal opponent until only one survivor remained standing.

Gladiators were not always willing participants. Most gladiators were slaves, criminals, or prisoners of war who were forced into combat to entertain the Roman people. Regardless of their personal opinions and fears, gladiators were responsible for putting on a good show for the attendees. If the audience, which almost always included the Emperor, was unsatisfied with a performance, their displeasure could only be pacified with the death of the disappointing gladiator. Every gladiator who entered the Colosseum understood the importance of both their combat skills and ability to charm the onlookers. After all, their life depended on both.

1. The word vast, as underlined and used in this passage, most nearly means
 - a. horizon
 - b. extensive
 - c. spacious
 - d. miniscule
2. The best title for this passage is
 - a. "The Colosseum Today"
 - b. "The Fall of the Roman Empire"
 - c. "Through the Eyes of the Audience"
 - d. "A Gladiator's Fight for Life"
3. It is probably true that
 - a. all gladiators were fearless
 - b. most gladiators were willing to die for what they believed in
 - c. many gladiators did not live as long as the average Roman
 - d. no gladiators ever survived battle
4. The word elude, as underlined and used in this passage, most nearly means
 - a. avoid
 - b. conquer
 - c. conspire
 - d. irritate
5. The word pacified, as underlined and used in this passage, most nearly means
 - a. emphasized
 - b. calmed
 - c. questioned
 - d. bewildered
6. Which character trait of a gladiator does this passage most reveal?
 - a. combative
 - b. apathetic
 - c. cowardly
 - d. valiant
7. Comparing the second and third paragraphs, the third paragraph
 - a. compares past and modern uses of the Colosseum
 - b. describes the relationship between the gladiator and audience
 - c. criticizes the use of animals in battle
 - d. discusses the different ways the Emperor influenced the battles
8. A victor is
 - a. a guest
 - b. a beast
 - c. a loser
 - d. a winner

Non-Fiction Reading Comprehension Practice

Benjamin Franklin was born in 1706 in Boston to a soap maker named Josiah Franklin. His father could not afford full schooling for all his children, but Benjamin loved books and worked in his elder brother's printing business. He worked in the trade for many years before buying the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1729, which was a new publication at the time. He also wrote and made cartoons for the newspaper. In addition, he worked toward improving living conditions in the city of Philadelphia: improving the efficiency of street lights, cleaning the roads and starting libraries. In the 1740s, Franklin retired from his printing business and turned to science with great success. He was a very smart man and his work on electricity, such as the "kite experiment" which confirmed the nature of lightning, made him famous all over the American colonies.

Now you might be wondering how this printer and scientist ended up on the \$100 bill. Franklin earned the title of the "First American" for his efforts to unite the 13 American colonies, and for his long campaign for American independence from England. This part of the story starts in London. He went to London as a representative of Americans to get the British to keep assisting American colonies. In London, he became a member of the "Club of Honest Whigs" (who also wore wigs!) and began interacting with important political thinkers and activists of the time.

When he returned to Pennsylvania, he led a struggle against the powerful Penn family over their control of the colony, and was elected the Speaker of the Pennsylvania House in 1764. In 1765, he opposed the Stamp Act, which was a direct tax by the British Parliament on American colonies. He continued to write and campaign against British injustices in America.

When the American War of Independence began in the 1770s and every colony was required to send one delegate to represent its interests in the "Second Continental Congress," everyone in the Pennsylvania assembly chose Franklin. He was one of five people who wrote the final Declaration of Independence.

After the United States of America was established, Franklin held several important positions such as the first United States Postmaster General, Ambassador to France and sixth President of Pennsylvania. He is also famous today for his wise sayings, including "a penny saved is a penny earned" and "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

1. The word confirmed, as underlined and used in this passage, most nearly means
 - a) reassured
 - b) proved
 - c) discredited
 - d) received
2. Which character trait of Benjamin Franklin does this passage most reveal?
 - a) miserly
 - b) jovial
 - c) leisurely
 - d) empathic
3. The best title for this passage is
 - a) "A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned"
 - b) "The Discovery of Electricity"
 - c) "Benjamin Franklin and the American War"
 - d) "The Life and Contributions of Benjamin Franklin"
4. It is probably true that
 - a) Benjamin Franklin was well liked in Pennsylvania.
 - b) The Stamp Act benefited the American people.
 - c) Franklin was ashamed of his modest upbringing.
 - d) Franklin was fixated on becoming president.
5. The word struggle, as underlined and used in this passage, most likely means
 - a) to work against with difficulty or great effort
 - b) to make sudden, violent physical movements to escape restraints
 - c) to overcome obstructions to progress
 - d) to organize a peaceful conference
6. The word opposed, as underlined and used in this passage, most nearly means
 - a) approved
 - b) protested
 - c) conceded
 - d) demanded
7. Comparing the second and third paragraphs, the third paragraph
 - a) describes Franklin's rise to power and how his personality changes throughout the process.
 - b) compares the American Revolution to the Civil War.
 - c) discusses the resulting successes of Franklin as his hard work earns him the respect and support of the American people.
 - d) criticizes Franklin for causing unrest with his struggle against high power families.