

6th Grade Summer Reading Assignments Summer 2026

Due Date: First day of school – August 12, 2026

Students should bring the following assignments on the first day of school:

- 3 books with annotations
- 1 essay on *Aesop's Fables*
- 1 poster on *The Devil's Arithmetic*
- 1 page with discussion notes on their book of choice

Books:

- *Aesop's Fable*, by Aesop ISBN: 978-0141915784
- *The Devil's Arithmetic*, by Jane Yolen ISBN: 978-0142401095
- Book of your choice, from the list provided

Assignments (4):

1. Annotate all books:

- Students are to read and annotate all THREE books they read. The books and their annotations are due on the first day of school for a grade in literature.
- Annotation is your opportunity to engage with the author and the story. In essence, it allows you to talk to the novel. Taking part in the conversation with the novel and its characters will help you to remember what you read and improve your understanding of the story. This is done by using a combination of notes and symbols in your book. Below are some key points to remember for annotating. I have also created an annotation guide that you can use for a quick reference.
 - Avoid the use of highlighters and markers as they often bleed through the pages.
 - Observe your text. Good reading isn't fast or perfect - it's slowing down to observe, to see, what is happening in the novel.
 - Trust what you notice! No one knows what is important the first time they read.
 - I'm not asking you to find specific things. Everyone is unique and what you notice, or think is important, might be different from your classmates.
 - "Connections" can be a lot of things. It is important to make connections between the novel and your existing knowledge or experiences. These can include events, thoughts, or characters in the novel, your own experiences, feelings, people you know, or other books you have read.
 - Mark words or phrases. You do NOT need to mark whole sentences, just a word or phrase is enough.

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- Use open spaces like the beginning/end of the novel or chapter.
 - Character lists – great for keeping track of who you meet in a chapter
 - Page numbers for important information
 - List themes, plot points, etc. with page numbers
 - Write a short (1 or 2 sentences) summary at the end of each chapter
- Think of a synonym. When you find a word you don't know, think about what the meaning might be, look up the definition, and write down a synonym that you'll remember.

2. Essay on *Aesop's Fables*, by Aesop

- **Instructions:** The essay is due on the first day of school. It is a test grade for literature. We will use the essay in our first few lessons, so it is imperative that they students read the novels and complete the essay before school begins. Students are to complete the pre-writing exercise on a separate piece of paper and use it to write their essay response for the prompt below.
- **Required Elements:**
 - Hand-written in the student's best cursive (applies to all steps, from pre-writing to completed essay)
 - Skip lines to allow space for commenting and editing
 - Correct spelling, grammar, and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, etc.)
 - Citations are used
 - Book information is the last page, titled "Works Cited"
 - Examples from the book are cited using in-text citations
- **Essay Prompt:** Choose one fable from *Aesop's Fables* and write a three-paragraph essay explaining the story, the lesson it teaches, and why that lesson still matters today.
 - Paragraph 1 — Summary of the Fable
 - Retell the fable in your own words. Explain who the main characters are, what problem they face, and how the story ends. Keep your summary clear and focused on the most important events.
 - Paragraph 2 — The Moral or Lesson
 - Identify the moral of the fable. Explain what the lesson means and how the events of the story show that lesson. Use specific examples from the fable to support your explanation.
 - Paragraph 3 — Why the Lesson Matters Today
 - Connect the fable's lesson to real life. Explain why this moral is still important for people today. You may give a modern example, describe

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a situation where the lesson applies, or explain how someone your age could use this wisdom.

- **Pre-writing Exercise:**

- Which fable are you choosing, and why did you pick it?
- Who are the main characters, and what problem do they face in the story?
- What are the most important events that happen in the fable?
- What is the moral or lesson of the fable?
- How do the events of the story show that lesson? Give at least one example.
- Why is this lesson still important for people today?
- Can you think of a real-life situation where this lesson applies?

3. Poster on *The Devil's Arithmetic*, by Jane Yolen

- **Instructions:** Students are to create a “one-pager” book report that combines visual elements and thoughtful reflection to show what have learned from the novel. They may create it completely from scratch or use a template. I have also included some examples of “one-pagers.”
- **Prompt:** Create a visual representation of *The Devil's Arithmetic* that shows your understanding of the novel's characters, themes, and message about remembering the past. Your one-pager must be colorful, neat, and fill the entire page. Use examples from the text to support your answers.
- **Required Elements:**
 - Design Requirements:
 - 22”x28” poster
 - Use color pens, markers, paint, etc., unless black and white is the best design choice
 - Writing must be
 - in ink – no pencil
 - in cursive
 - Everything must be drawn / written by the student's hand – no printed materials allowed
 - Citations are used
 - Book information goes on the back under your heading
 - Examples from the book are cited using in-text citations near the information
 - On the back of your one-pager
 - Full heading
 - Citation for your copy of the novel
 - On the front of your one-pager:
 - Title and author of the book prominently displayed on the front
 - Central Image – draw a large, meaningful image that represents and important idea from the novel.

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- Theme Connection - Write a well-developed paragraph (6+ sentences) explaining one major theme of the novel and why it still matters today. You can also make a connection between that theme and the virtues of the Church. The themes include but are not limited to:
 - The importance of remembering the past
 - The power of identity and family
 - Courage in the face of suffering
 - Sacrifice and love
- Quote
 - Include at least one meaningful quote from the novel that reflects the theme you wrote about
 - Remember to use quotation marks and cite the page number
- Character Insight – Choose one of the major characters and write a paragraph (6+ sentences) that tells:
 - who they are
 - what they teach Hannah (or what she learns if you choose Hannah)
 - how they show courage, hope, or the importance of remembering
- Symbol or Illustration
 - Draw at least three images or symbols that represent ideas from the novel.
 - Include a word or phrase with your image/symbol
 - Include the page number for reference

4. Book of Choice

- Students will turn in their annotated novel, AND notes they will use for discussion in class
- Students will be graded on their participation in a class discussion
- Discussion notes do not have to be complete sentences, but should include enough information to help the student answer the following questions during class discussion:
 - Discuss the plot, setting, and characters of the novel
 - Identify how the author makes the characters believable
 - Identify how the author reveals what a character is like by what they say, what they do, and what other characters say about them
 - Identify the conflict
 - Identify the setting and its significance to the story
 - How do the main characters change throughout the story
 - What lesson does the main character learn
 - How did the novel make you feel
 - How did you feel about the characters' behavior
 - What connections can you make between the novel and your own life (events, people, etc.)
 - What connections can you make between the novel and other novels you have read?
 - How did the author use words effectively (descriptions, feelings, etc.)

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Aesop's Fables Essay Rubric:

Criteria	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Developing	1 – Beginning
Paragraph 1: Summary of the Fable	Clear, accurate summary; includes key characters, problem, and resolution; written entirely in student's own words.	Accurate summary with most key events; mostly in student's own words.	Some important events missing OR too much retelling; may rely on copying.	Summary is unclear, incomplete, or mostly copied.
Paragraph 2: Moral / Lesson	Clearly identifies the moral; explains it with strong examples from the fable.	Identifies the moral and explains it with at least one example.	Moral is mentioned but not clearly explained OR examples are weak.	Moral is missing, incorrect, or not explained.
Paragraph 3: Why the Lesson Matters Today	Thoughtful explanation of why the lesson is still important; includes a clear modern example.	Explains why the lesson matters today; may include a simple example.	Attempts to connect the lesson to today but is unclear or incomplete.	No real-life connection or explanation.
Organization & Structure	Three well-developed paragraphs with clear topic sentences and transitions.	Three paragraphs with mostly clear organization.	Paragraphs are uneven or missing topic sentences.	Writing is disorganized or missing multiple paragraphs.
Conventions (Grammar, Spelling, Punctuation)	Few to no errors; writing is clear and easy to read.	Some errors but meaning is clear.	Frequent errors that distract from meaning.	Many errors that make the writing difficult to understand.

Total Score: _____ / 20

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The Devil's Arithmetic Poster:

Criteria	4 – Exceeds Expectations	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Developing	1 – Beginning
Required Elements (title/author, central image, quote + explanation, character box, theme paragraph, 3 symbols)	All required elements are included, complete, and thoughtfully done.	All required elements are included and complete.	Most elements included but some are missing or incomplete.	Several required elements missing.
Central Image	Large, meaningful, creative image that clearly represents an important idea.	Clear image that represents an idea from the story.	Image is present but unclear or unrelated.	Image missing or barely attempted.
Quote & Explanation	Strong quote (or paraphrase) with a clear, thoughtful explanation.	Quote with a clear explanation.	Quote or explanation is unclear or incomplete.	Quote missing OR no explanation.
Character Insight	3–4 clear sentences showing strong understanding of the character's role and lesson.	Basic explanation of the character and what they teach Hannah.	Limited or unclear explanation.	Missing or incorrect.
Theme Paragraph	Well-written 4–5 sentences explaining a theme and why it matters today.	Clear paragraph explaining a theme.	Paragraph is short, unclear, or missing key ideas.	Theme missing or incorrect.
Symbols & Labels	Three creative, meaningful symbols with clear labels.	Three symbols with labels.	One or two symbols OR labels unclear.	Symbols missing.
Neatness & Presentation	Full page, colorful, organized, and very neat.	Mostly neat, colorful, and organized.	Some color or organization, but messy or incomplete.	Hard to read, little color, or unfinished.

Total Points: _____ / 28