

Welcome to 8th Grade!

Dear Rising 8th Grader,

Welcome to your summer reading assignment for *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen.

Eighth grade is a pivotal year where your reading and writing skills will shift from basic comprehension to deep, critical analysis. This summer, we are exploring how literature can act as a bridge to the past, keeping history alive through the power of storytelling.

The Devil's Arithmetic is a gripping, emotional, and historically significant novel that handles a very dark period of our global history: the Holocaust. Through the eyes of the main character, Hannah, you will experience what it means to transition from indifference about the past to carrying the torch of remembrance for future generations.

Before You Read

The Devil's Arithmetic takes place during the Holocaust, the genocide in which millions of Jewish people and others were killed by Nazi Germany during World War II.

As you read:

- Pay attention to how Hannah changes throughout the story.
- Notice the importance of memory and family history.
- Think about how people show bravery even during difficult times.

Grading Breakdown

- Reading Log Questions = 30 points (Reading)
- Theme Analysis = 30 points (Writing)
- Creative Project = 40 points (Reading Project Grade)

****This will be due the first week of school no later than Thursday September 3rd.****

Remember to pace yourself while reading. Happy reading and see you in the Fall!

Miss. Dawkins

Part 1: Reading Log Questions

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences as you read.

Chapters 1–3

How does Hannah feel about her family's Passover traditions at the beginning of the novel?

Why do you think Hannah gets frustrated with her relatives?

What clues suggest that something unusual may happen?

Chapters 4–6

Describe Hannah's confusion after opening the door.

What differences does Hannah notice between her own life and the village she enters?

Why is Gitl important to Hannah?

Chapters 7–9

Describe life in the village before the Nazis arrive.

How do the villagers react to the soldiers?

What emotions does Hannah experience during this section?

Chapters 10–12

What is the significance of the train ride?

Describe conditions at the camp.

How do the prisoners try to maintain hope and humanity?

Chapters 13–15

How has Hannah changed since the beginning of the novel?

Describe an example of sacrifice or courage.

Why do memories matter in this story?

Final Chapters

What lesson does Hannah learn?

Explain the meaning of the title *The Devil's Arithmetic*.

What message do you think the author wants readers to understand?

Part 2: Theme Reflection Writing

Choose ONE of the prompts below and write a well-developed response.

Requirements:

- 2–3 paragraphs
- Use specific examples from the novel
- Include proper grammar and complete sentences

Prompt Choices

Option A: Memory and Identity

How do memories shape who we are? Explain how Hannah’s understanding of herself changes throughout the novel.

Option B: Courage During Difficult Times

Choose one character who demonstrates courage. Explain what makes that character brave.

Option C: Importance of History

Why is it important for people to learn about historical events like the Holocaust?

Part 3: Creative Final Project

Choose ONE option for the creative portion of the project.

→ Option 1: Movie Poster

Create a movie poster for *The Devil’s Arithmetic*. Include:

- A slogan/tagline
- Important symbols or scenes
- Main characters
- A short summary

→ Option 2: Theme Collage

Create a collage (paper) showing important themes, symbols, and emotions from the novel. Include at least 10 images or symbols with short explanations.