

Rolling Hills Country Day School Eighth Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to the eighth grade! We believe that books can open new worlds and provide novel experiences to readers. Reading can help develop one's imagination and increase one's knowledge while expanding vocabulary as well as increasing composition skills. **All eighth grade students are required to read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak. For *The Book Thief*, students will complete the written assignment outlined below. This assignment will be graded and is due on the first day of class.** While there is no written assignment for *Of Mice and Men*, students will take a quiz and complete several in-class assignments on the novel. Students will also be expected to be able to compare and contrast the journeys of the protagonists. We look forward to working with you.

The Book Thief Written Assignment

Before you begin reading, please peruse the assignment below so that you know what you need to focus on as you read. In your own book, we recommend that you highlight or underline certain words or phrases that are important and take notes in the margins. Please analyze the following in **complete sentences. Do not write an essay, but simply type the question and respond with your answer and related supporting details.** Make your answers short and specific. Provide textual evidence with page numbers if needed.

1. How does the author, Markus Zusak, use foreshadowing to pull the reader into the story? Give an example from the book.
2. Describe Liesel's friendship with Rudy. How did it change and grow throughout the novel?
3. Why does Zusak make Death the narrator? How does Death see things a human narrator could not?
4. Is Hans Huberman a courageous man? How does he show courage? How does he show lack of courage?
5. Name some acts of resistance in the novel. When is the resistance effective? When is it not? Give examples from the novel.
6. Would you recommend this book? Why or why not?

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY PROJECT

Preliminary Topic Selection Worksheet

Due: Wednesday September 9, 2026

Student Name: _____

It is time to begin thinking about the topic you would like to research for the 8th Grade National History Day Project. Remember, this should be a topic that inspires you, motivates you, or piques your curiosity – something that you will want to spend an entire school-year researching!

Next Year's History Day Theme is:

Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change

Your topic will need to relate to the theme, as well as U.S. History.

STEP ONE: UNDERSTANDING THE THEME

1. In the space provided, define each of the following terms:

Innovation:

Impact:

Influence:

2. Brainstorm and list topics that might fit into the category of innovation.

STEP TWO: IDENTIFYING AREAS OF INTEREST

3. In the space provided, list general topics that you are interested in. (i.e. sports, art, technology, etc.) Please list multiple interests!

4. In the space provided, list topics in **U.S. History** that you find interesting or intriguing, or that you would like to learn more about. Please list multiple topics!
(It does not have to be a topic that you studied in class.)

STEP THREE: MERGING YOUR INTERESTS WITH HISTORY

(This step might require you to conduct a Google search to help you find a topic of interest.)

Now that you have completed steps one and two, it is helpful to think about where your general areas of interest might intersect with U.S. History.

Topics for NHD do not have to be traditional topics that you learn about in history class. You can branch out to consider topics beyond the history classroom, such as sports, art, literature, etc.. For example:

- a student interested in Art could research the innovative techniques of Abstract Expressionism used by Jackson Pollock
- a student interested in sports could research the innovation of the 24-second shot clock in the NBA
- a student interested in photography could study Jacob Riis' innovative "Magic Lantern" Shows, which he used to spread awareness about the living conditions of the urban poor in the early 1900s

Keep in mind: Students who put more thought and effort into this part of the process typically end up finding a topic that resonates with them. This translates into doing well on the project!

5. A potential topic for the NHD **Innovation in History** Project might be:

6. I am interested in this specific topic because...

7. This topic relates to the theme of **Innovation in History** because...

8. I know that choosing to have a positive attitude about my research project will help me to be successful. I can have a positive attitude by....

HOMEWORK POINT VALUE: 15 Points