

Dallas Christian

Honors English I Summer Reading 2017

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck
Do Hard Things by Alex and Brett Harris

About your teacher:

My name is Mrs. Winn, and I am excited for my first year teaching at Dallas Christian! I am married and I have four children: Eden, Ruby, Judah, and Asher. I enjoy spending time with my family and church family, reading, and teaching. I am looking forward to getting to know each of you!

Note for Parents (from CommonSenseMedia.org):

Parents need to know that *Of Mice and Men*, often required reading in middle school or high school, is one of the most affecting portraits of America during the Great Depression. It offers a glimpse of men attempting to hold onto their dreams of a better life when the odds of their success are miniscule. Families can talk about...

- The values of friendship and loyalty and how they can be tested in times of economic hardship.
- As a child, Lennie suffered some kind brain injury that impeded his intellectual development. How has society's treatment of the mentally disabled changed over the decades?
- Lennie and George dream of owning a farm of their own, one where Lennie can take care of the rabbits. What kinds of dreams of the future do people have today? What are some of the obstacles they might encounter in trying to achieve them?

Students will also need to read *Do Hard Things*. In this non fiction book, the authors provide a biblical foundation for calling teens to a life of purposed discipline and preparation for life. As your freshman student begins the adventure of high school this is a valuable resource for both teens and families. As your student works through this book, families can discuss (from therebelution.com):

- In what ways do you think popular culture misrepresents what the teen years are for? Can you think of one thing that would change if you and your friends believed – really believed – that low expectations were ripping you off?
- Looking back, do you see a season, a book, or an event that changed what you believe or how you live? If so, how are you different now?
- Have you ever found yourself behaving differently – and accomplishing a lot more – simply because someone expected you to? Describe the experience.
- “Don’t do bad stuff” can easily be the default standard of excellence in church circles. Do you see any problem with that? Talk about it.

ASSIGNMENT:

Over the summer you will need to read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and *Do Hard Things* by Alex and Brett Harris, and complete the corresponding assignments. The assignments are intended to guide your reading and focus your thoughts in preparation for the discussions, summer reading test, and writing assignments you will engage in when you return in August. **The assignments are due on the first day of school.**

Make sure you read all the assignment directions and are clear on all parts. It’s up to you to email me with any questions, and I strongly suggest you ask me if you have any confusion. Don’t wait until August to begin this assignment. Please do not plagiarize or copy material from the Internet to pass off as your own. Instead, embrace academic honesty by doing your own thoughtful work. This will only benefit you in the future. **Bring your books and printed journal assignments on the first day of school. Don’t forget them.**

Your summer reading assignment is to annotate the text and keep a dialectical journal as you read. Please see the annotation and dialectical journal instructions on page 2 for more information. You should:

- **annotate 10 or more passages in each book, and**
- **respond with 10 or more entries for each book in your dialectical journal.**
- **Be prepared to take a test over *Of Mice and Men* and *Do Hard Things* upon your return to school.**

Annotation and Dialectical Journal Instructions

One way to read actively is to annotate the text. To annotate a book, you simply choose what you think is important (or what you like) and underline/highlight, and note it in the margin of the book. Annotate as you read *Of Mice and Men* and *Do Hard Things*. Reading journals, or dialectical journals, record your reaction to the book you are reading; therefore, you determine what you want to highlight/underline, and make note of it in the margins of the book. Hence, you must write in the book! You may note what a character says or does, or you may note something about the author’s writing. Do your best to choose quotes from the whole book, and not just one or two sections or chapters.

Your goal is to gather quotes that catch your attention and then to respond to the quotes by analyzing them. You may respond to ideas by writing about a person, a setting, an event, or a theme in the text. Why did the quote pop out to you? You may choose quotes that you find particularly insightful, interesting, or funny. Is something unusual or particularly meaningful?

You will do your journal over *Of Mice and Men* and *Do Hard Things* **using quotes from throughout the book. You should title your journal: Reading Journal for *Of Mice and Men*, and a separate one *Reading Journal for Do Hard Things*. It must be typed in Times New Roman, 12 point font, and double spaced.** It should contain your first and last name, class period, and my name (Mrs. Winn) in the upper left corner so you can receive credit for your work. You will need to locate 10 quotes from each book and write a response to each explaining the importance of that particular quote. You can format the entries side-by-side like the one below, or you can place the quote first, then a space, and then your commentary below. **Each entry must be one paragraph in length (this means 5 clear sentences).** Some responses may be longer than others.

Example Dialectical Journal Entry:

| Quote from Text: Can be quotes about a character, an event or a scene | Commentary: Thoughts, comments, ideas, connections, understandings, recognition of literary devices |
|---|--|
| <p>1. “George went on. ‘With us it ain’t like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that [cares] about us... If them other guys gets in jail they can rot... But not us.’ Lennie broke in. ‘But not us! An why? Because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you and that’s why.’” (14)</p> | <p>George and Lennie are talking about how they are different from the other guys who work in the fields. The biggest difference is that they have someone to care about them. They are not alone. Lennie and George have each other. They have someone that cares about and looks after them, and this separates them from the masses of lonely men. Even though George says that he would be better off without Lennie, he knows this isn’t true because he would be suffering from the worse human condition: loneliness.</p> |

Possible ways to begin your commentary (analysis):

- I wonder if this means....
- I don’t understand this because....
- I like/dislike this idea because...
- I agree with this idea because...
- This part is confusing because...
- This idea makes me feel...
- This idea reminds me of the character _____ in the story _____.
- I didn’t expect the author to say this because...
- The idea reminds me of....
- This quote is particularly effective/thought-provoking/ depressing/unusual because...
- This makes me think that _____ will happen later.
- I can apply this to myself by...

Happy reading! I will see you in August!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Winn
awinn@dallaschristian.com