

Welcome to Ascension Episcopal School 8th Grade English!

Once again, it is time to choose summer reading books in anticipation of the new school year. As eighth graders, you will read **three, free-choice, middle school appropriate fiction books**. The *Cover to Cover List*, which is available from the AES website-www.aesgators.org, provides suggested reading from classic to contemporary. However, you do not have to select a book from the Cover to Cover List.

For each book, you will write a **précis**. The word **précis** means summary; therefore, you will be composing summaries of your three novels. The key to writing a good précis is to stay concise, organized, and specific in your word choice. Because a précis is only seven sentences long, you must follow a structured format to complete it correctly. You will review and apply the following terms in your précis: **setting, character, plot, conflict, resolution/denouement, and theme**. You can find the definitions for the terms below.

Setting: the time and place in which events in a story occur.

Character: a person, animal, or natural force presented as a person appearing in a literary work.

Plot: the sequence of events or actions in a story.

Conflict: the problem(s) in the story. It can be internal (man vs. self) or external (man vs. man or society, man vs. nature, or man vs. supernatural).

Denouement/resolution: outcome of the story.

Theme: the general (central) idea or message about life that a writer wishes to convey in the literary work.

Format for the Précis

Top line: Title of novel and author (Remember to underline or italicize book titles.)

Skip a line. (You must write the précis in single-spaced paragraph form. Indent the first sentence. If you are handwriting, use blue or black ink. If you are typing it, use a standard font size and type.)

1st Sentence: Discuss the setting.

2nd Sentence: Tell about the main character/characters.

3rd Sentence: Discuss the main conflict.

4th Sentence: Discuss the plot.

5th Sentence: Discuss more of the plot.

6th Sentence: Tell about the denouement or resolution of the story.

7th sentence: Discuss the theme of the novel.

Sample Précis

The Giver by Lois Lowry

The story takes place in a futuristic, structured community. Jonas, a 12-year-old boy, and the Giver, his mentor, are the main characters. The conflict, man vs. society, arises when Jonas realizes that the rigid repression in his society is wrong, and he must decide whether to go along with the community or break free from that way of life. Jonas is chosen as the new Receiver of memories for the community, one of the most respected assignments; however, the job comes with much pain as the truth of his way of life is revealed. Jonas makes the decision to leave in order to save a little baby boy's life, but when he leaves, all the memories he holds will be transferred back to the community. The story ends with the escape of Jonas and baby Gabriel, and the community is left to deal with the reality of years past. One theme in the novel is that memory is the key to living a fulfilled and complete life.

Précis may be submitted in three ways:

- a. Hand-written in blue or black ink; write on the fronts of pages only; staple the pages together. Turn in the first day of school.
- b. Typed (by YOU), staple the pages together. **Turn in the first day of school.**
- c. **Submitted online** (see attached directions). One bonus point for each online submission posted on or before July 31!
- d. **GUMS (Grammar, Usage, Mechanics and Spelling) will count, so please do your best.**

Please feel free to contact me with questions. Happy reading and writing!

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8th Grade Summer Reading
Online Submission
Directions

1. Go to Ms. LeBlanc's webpage~
<http://teachersites.schoolworld.com/webpages/shellyleblanc/>. If you have trouble finding it, go to www.myteacherpages.com. Search for "Leblanc."
2. Click on **My Message Board** in the left hand column.
3. Click on **Summer Reading: Précis**. Click on **Post Précis Here**. Click **Post Reply**. When prompted, enter your name, your e-mail address, and finally your précis entry. Follow the assigned format. Be sure to click **SAVE**.
4. **YOUR POST WILL NOT BE VISIBLE UNTIL I APPROVE IT!!!**

You may respond to other students' entries, but your précis should be your own. It is appropriate to tactfully disagree or positively agree with classmates.