

## GRADE 8 LITERATURE – 2021

*Men of Iron*, Howard Pyle  
*Kidnapped*, Robert Louis Stevenson  
*A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens  
*Grisly Grisell, A Tale of the War of the Roses*, Charlotte Yonge  
*Outlaws of Ravenhurst*, Sister M. Imelda Wallace, S.L.  
*Johnny Tremain*, Esther Forbes

### INTRODUCTION

As we strive to restore all things in Christ, let us not overlook the value – and power – of literature. Good Catholic literature was once a standard, and Catholic authors abounded. When the Catholic parochial school system in America was flourishing, the beautiful ideals and virtues of countless characters in innumerable Catholic books had a profound impact on generation after generation of Catholic students. The love of the literary arts and of virtue was inculcated simultaneously, and those of us who are products of the old Catholic school system knew, deep down, that our parents were providing us with a great gift that would last a lifetime. May God bless them for the sacrifices they made for us.

Now, to do what our parents did for us, we teach our children at home, at the table in the dining room or at little desks huddled near the wood-burning stove in the den. The truths that we teach them are no less certain today. This Faith points out a higher excellence for which we must strive – an education wherein religion is not merely included in the curriculum, but is integrated as the golden thread which runs through all the subjects and disciplines taught, with Catholic literature having a place of primacy. Brother George N. Schuster, S.M., in the 4-Sight edition of *CATHOLIC AUTHORS*, summed it all up eloquently:

*The role of literature in this formation [of youth] is distinctive, at times, decisive, with the grace of God. It has an especial potency to inspire to holiness and apostolicity. Literature is concrete, warm, palpitating – the “hypostatic union of intellect and emotion.” It moves the heart of man, impels the will, exalts to action by dramatizing those vital spiritual realities that must be the marrow of the Christian’s bones, by animating them in character, action, and life situations, Catholic literature can make truth dynamic and galvanize to love and immolation. The ultimate achievement of literature is this incarnation of truth for the inspiration of man. For countless saints, a book was the admitted occasion for the impulsion of their will across the tragic gap between knowing and doing. It catapulted vacillation from, “Not yet, Oh Lord,” to “NOW!” When a man sees truth, he no longer stands on the brink of Christ’s invitation, dabbing a fearful toe in the water. He walks straightway into the fierce embraces of God’s love, and God’s solicitude bears him up upon the water. Truth is compelling when realized. It is best when seen. It is seen when it is embodied, actualized. Catholic literature at its best incarnates truth on the dramatic plane – THAT MEN MAY SEE.*

Students will read six novels this year. The first one is *Men of Iron* by Howard Pyle. It is a story of young Myles Falworth, son of a lord unjustly disgraced for treason, who was forced to make his fortune as best he might in the days when men seemed made of iron. How he entered the service of a powerful lord, rose to knighthood, defeated his father’s old enemy in a thrilling combat, and won the friendship of the king is told against a background of the dangerous times of the fourteenth century. Students will then read *Kidnapped*, a historical fiction about an orphan who, cheated out of his fortune by a greedy uncle, faced misfortunes with courage and found friendship along the way. Students will move on to *A Christmas Carol*, a classic novella about a miser who, thanks to a series of visitors, learned about generosity, gratitude and the true treasures of life. They will move on to *A Tale of the Wars of the Roses*, a heart-warming tale of perseverance, swift battles and numerous displays of true virtue. The Wars of the Roses took place in a time

of civil strife in 15<sup>th</sup> century England; a time when the House of York and the House of Lancaster battled for the crown. Caught in the middle were two proud families and a boy and a girl – promised in marriage from early childhood. A tragic accident leaves Grisell's once beautiful face disfigured. Through terrible humiliations and horrors of war between one-time friends, Grisell emerges a shining example of true love and devotion. Students will read *Outlaws of Ravenhurst* as well, which, according to Brother George Schuster, "will set your blood to racing" as it exemplifies heroism for the Faith in the face of persecution. The year will end with *Johnny Tremain*, a tale about a fourteen-year old apprentice, whose life was thrown into the midst of the American Revolution after an accident burnt his hand.

### ASSIGNMENT

After each weekly reading assignment, students will be required to answer questions in well-written paragraphs of approximately 50-75 words. For the last book, however, they will write chapter summaries, consisting of two or three concise paragraphs. A writing example of what is expected can be seen on the following page. The student will also write a coherent, 500-word book report (typed, double-spaced) which discusses each book. It is highly recommended that students keep notes with their reading, since the reading comprehension questions will focus on details and there are many character/place names and plot elements to absorb. **Besides proper heading, students must also number each answer to indicate its corresponding question.**

Graded thought questions will be sent to the school as indicated in the lesson plan, so that the students' tutors can review their performance and provide helpful feedback. **Grading Criteria** are also provided so that parents and tutors can assess the student's work more objectively, and that the student can understand the assessment. **Assignments which are to be sent to school are in bold print and clearly marked "SEND GRADED/UNGRADED ASSIGNMENT TO SCHOOL."** Also, be sure to calculate a percentage grade for all required assignments that parents will grade.

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**GRADE 8 LITERATURE - 2021**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

MI – *Men of Iron*, Howard Pyle

**Week 1**

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

MI Read Introduction and Chapters 1-5.

Take notes for reference while completing weekly assignments and book reports. \*

**Answer the following questions, EACH in a well-written paragraph of approximately 50-75 words.**

- 1. What are the strange circumstances that force Lord Falworth and his family into hiding?**
- 2. Describe the “company of esquires” in the service of most great lords of these days. Include the duties of each group and the groups particular to Devlen.**

**Send UNGRADED assignment to school.** \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 2**

MI Read Chapters 6-10.

**Answer the following questions, EACH in a well-written paragraph of approximately 50-75 words.**

- 1. Describe the characteristics of Myles that make him stand out among the other boys.**
- 2. Describe the suits of armor worn by the boys during their “battles”.**

**Send GRADED assignment to school.** \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Make special notes of the main characters, settings, and events as you complete each assignment every week. Keeping such notes will aid you in your book reports.**

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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