

May 24, 2023

Dear Parents and Students of Advanced 8 English,

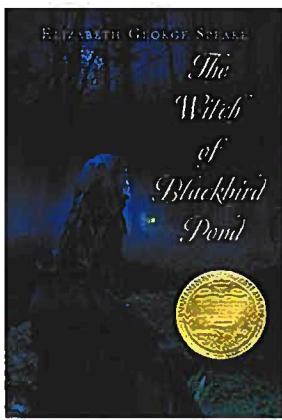
Congratulations on your acceptance into Advanced English 8 for the 2023-2024 school year. The advanced class is not for most students and is designed only for those who truly need and want an extra challenge. The class has more intensive project requirements, has a higher expectation for writing, and requires summer preparation.

Attached you will find the summer assignment for Advanced English 8. Over the summer you will read *Witch of Blackbird Pond*, a Newbery Medal winning historical novel set in colonial America. After you read the novel (the main characters are about your age:), follow the directions to create your book cover. The book cover and rubric are due the first day of class in the new school year. The book can be purchased on Amazon for \$7.49, but you are welcome to purchase or download the book from any source you prefer. Please bring your copy of the book with you on the first day of school.

If you have any questions about Advanced English over the summer, please email me and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. My email address is [val.marchione@go-vcs.com](mailto:val.marchione@go-vcs.com) and I will be checking school email regularly. Do NOT wait until the last days before school starts to begin the novel. You must complete the reading before you can begin the assignment, so please allow enough time both to read and enjoy the novel, as well as the assignment.

I am looking forward to an exciting year with you!

**Dr. Valerie Marchione**  
VCMS Dean of Academics  
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## VCMS Advanced English 8 Summer Assignment

### Book Jacket - Directions and Rubrics:

Use a clean piece of 8 1/2 x 11 white printer paper, or a single piece of 9 x 12 white construction paper to complete your assignment. Fold the paper in half **book-style** to present your project. Read the rubric for each portion of the assignment to be sure you have completed all requirements before submitting your project on the **first day of class**. Summary and review may be handwritten or printed but must be neat with no errors. ***Illegible work will not be graded.***

**Book Cover:** Refer to the directions on the following pages and the rubric below. This will be the **front cover** of your folded paper.

- /5 Illustrated book cover represents a character, conflict, or event from the novel.
- /3 Illustration is student's original work, although digital elements may be added
- /2 Book cover clearly includes book title and author.

**Book Summary:** Refer to the directions on the following pages and the rubric below. This will be the **right inside page** of your folded project.

- /5 Summary is one well-constructed paragraph of 5-7 sentences.
- /5 Topic sentence follows model sentence format from the instructions.
- /4 Summary provides descriptive details of genre, setting, characters, and conflict
- /1 Summary does NOT give away the ending of the story.
- /5 Mechanics: Summary shows evidence of proof reading with correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

**Book Review:** Refer to the directions on the following pages and the rubric below. This will be the **back cover** of your project.

- /5 The **introduction** provides insight and opinion on the book about what the author intends to communicate through the story. Minimum 3-5 sentences.
- /10 The **body paragraph** tells how the main character develops or learns through the story, how the characters interact, if the main character seems realistic in the circumstances of the novel, and describes the writing style of the author. Paragraph is 5-7 sentences.
- /5 **Conclusion** paragraph states reviewer's opinion of the book with supporting evidence from the book. Minimum 3 sentences.
- /4 Mechanics: Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- /1 Reviewer's first and last name are at the bottom of the review. Work submitted without a name will be marked late when identified.

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_/55

Teacher comments:

## Book Summary Directions

### Writing Your Book Summary or “The Back Cover Blurb”

Your summary will be on the back cover of your book jacket to give the reader a brief overview of the story setting, characters, and plot. The challenge of a book summary is that it must offer a large amount of information in a short space. You should be able to write your summary in a single well-developed paragraph. It also should not give away the ending of the story. Your summary should include the following elements:

- **The genre and setting of the book**

It's important to establish the genre of the book in the summary. Readers want a sense of the style of the book, whether it is science fiction, fantasy, historical, or fact. This can be a simple sentence that ties in to the overall conflict or setting of the book.

- **A description of the main character(s)**

Don't just tell the character's name. Is he an ultra-suave British superspy? Is he a sensitive soul? Is he a misfit in his society? Is he deaf? Offer something that will help the reader instantly relate to the main character—or at least get them excited about his story.

- **The central conflict of the story**

What does the protagonist want? And what's preventing her from getting what she wants? If your book has a villain, introduce him here. Remember there may be minor conflicts throughout the novel, but your summary should focus on the main conflict only. Your summary should give an overall statement about the conflict, but remember not to spoil the outcome for future readers!

- **The antagonist's goal**

What is it the protagonist must overcome or achieve by the end of the novel? Remember you want to state the goal of the character, but not give away the end of the story.

### How do you begin your summary?

A sample sentence format below will get you started. Fill in the blanks with elements of your novel, and then develop your summary based on the prompts above.

*In a (SETTING), (YOUR PROTAGONIST) has a (CONFLICT) because of (ANTAGONIST or SOURCE OF CONFLICT) as they try to (GOAL).*

...

## Book Review Directions

**A book review is NOT a summary.** It is an **assessment** to attract the interest of potential readers of the book. Follow the steps below to write your review. Be sure to include each element presented. Your book review will be shared in class for additional discussion.

**Read the entire book before beginning your book review.** It is impossible to paint a full, all-inclusive picture of the book if you have not reached its final page.

**Take notes as you read.** Does something catch your eye? Makes you question? Strike you as important to the plot flow? You can take notes in the text of a digital book (as you have done in class), write in the book you own (not a library copy), or use sticky notes to place throughout the book.

**Follow the format below to write your summary.**

**Paragraph 1: Introduction.** The introduction to your review should give your insight and opinion on the book. It should tell what the author intends to communicate through the story. Think in terms of a lesson, moral or experience that impacts the main character(s).

**Paragraph 2: Evaluation of the writing.** This is the body paragraph of your review. It tells what conflicts the characters face and how they respond in the story. This should offer more than just your opinion of the story. Elaborate on how the main character develops or learns throughout the book, how the characters interact, and if you found the main character to be realistic in the circumstances of the novel. Discuss the **writing style** of the author – whether it was conversational, easy to follow, or unrealistic in terms of the plot. **Choose one quote** from the novel that you found particularly important or meaningful to you.

**Paragraph 3: Personal opinion of the book overall.** Be honest. The review is **your opinion, what you learned** from the book. Convincing the reader of your views is the purpose of your review. Support your opinion with evidence. Tell why you think the way you do. Say, for example, why you couldn't relate to a character, or thought the story moved too slowly, or why you just couldn't stop reading until the end. **Your review will be a factor in whether this book is recommended to next year's class.**

**Finally:** Leave a star rating. Include **one sentence** about why you chose that rating.



## Mastering the book review.

### Book Review Checklist.

Rate It: 1 2 3 4 5

**INCLUDE**

- book name
- series
- author
- publisher
- publish date
- buy links
- goodread links
- author links
- book blurb
- provided by
- FTC disclaimer
- affiliate links

**REVIEW PROMPTS**

**DESCRIBE THE**

**STYLE**

**SETTING**

**EVENTS**

**PLOT**

**DID YOU ENJOY?**

**CHARACTERS**   **AUTHOR'S VOICE**   **THE WORLD**   **THE ENDING**

**WHO WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE BOOK TO?**

**YOUR BFF**   **TEENS**  
**ADULTS**   **YOUR PARENT**  
**FANS OF**   **NO ONE**

**QUESTIONS**

- what was your favorite part?
- who was your favorite character?
- did you learn something?
- will you read the author again?
- will you move on in the series?
- was it worth the price?