

Congratulations! You have finished elementary school and are ready for exciting new things in junior high. I hope that you have a wonderful summer and find lots of time to spend with your family--maybe a few extra minutes for sleep and video games too. In preparation for seventh grade and the new challenges ahead, I have prepared a summer reading project just for you. Yea! It includes two short stories that you can find easily on the internet and several questions and exercises to keep that brain in gear. The assignments should be completed by Friday, September 9--your second day of seventh grade. Do a good job, and you'll start the year with an A in English! Please follow the instructions carefully. If you come across any questions, you can e-mail me at heathermelton@faithbaptistschools.com. Once again, have a great summer! I'm looking forward to meeting you in September.

Your favorite seventh grade English teacher,

Mrs. Melton

Instructions: Answer each question thoroughly. All answers should be in complete sentences. Most should be answered with several sentences or even a paragraph. Clearly separate the answers for "The King of Mazy May" from those for "A Fable." Each question/assignment is clearly numbered; be sure that you do the same.

“The King of Mazy May”

Jack London

Before reading complete the following assignments:

1. Research and write a half-page about the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897.
2. ~~Research the life of Jack London. Create a time-line of the significant events of his life and his significant contributions.~~
3. Look up the following words in a dictionary. Write the definition, a list of synonyms, and an original sentence for each word.

antic	peer
capsize	prospector
commissioner	stampede
flounder	summit
liable	yaw

Now read the short story carefully and completely the questions and exercises below.

Literary terms: Protagonist and antagonist

4. Look up and define these terms and identify both from the story.

Comprehension check:

5. Why are Walt and his father living on Mazy May Creek?
6. What crime has begun to occur regularly on Mazy May Creek?
7. Why does Walt steal the claim-jumpers sled and dogs?
8. What do Walt and Loren Hall do at the end of the story?

Think critically:

9. Review the first three paragraphs of the story. What important point about human nature is the author presenting here?

10. What sort of person do you think Walt will grow up to be?

Extend interpretation:

11. Suppose this story took place today in a remote part of Canada or Alaska. How might the story be similar? How might it be different?

Journaling:

What a story Walt had to journal at the end of his day--a crime in progress, a dog-sled chase, a barrage of bullets! Consider the adventures of your summer; there may not be any dog-sled chases, but find some excitement and tell your story in five journal entries.

12. On five different days of this summer, journal your adventures. Give each one a catchy title. Consider using a couple of titles Walt might have used listed below, but you are welcome to create your own as well.

A Dangerous Ride

Dog Tired

A Job Well Done

I'm a Hero

Dodging Bullets

A Risky Race

“A Fable”

Mark Twain

Before you read the story, complete the following assignments.

1. Sometimes we are able to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words by examining their use in the sentence or their context. Read carefully each sentence taken from the story. Try to determine the meaning of each underlined word by simply examining the context.

“The animals out in the woods heard of this through the housecat, who was greatly admired by them because he was so learned, and so refined and civilized, and so polite and high-bred, and could tell them so much which they didn’t know before, and were not certain about afterward.”

“You look in it, and there you see the picture, and there you see the picture, and it is so dainty and charming and ethereal and inspiring in its unimaginable beauty that your head turns round and round, and you almost swoon with ecstasy.”

2. After defining the word using only its context, look up the words in the dictionary and record the definition.

Now read the short story carefully and complete the questions and exercises below.

Literary Analysis:

A fable must contain three essential elements: satire, personification, and a moral.

Satire is a literary technique in which the author indirectly makes fun of ideas or customs. Satire can be harsh and critical or gentle and witty.

Personification is to give human qualities or characteristics to an idea, object, or animal.

A moral is a lesson, usually very clear and direct, for the reader to learn.

3. Identify two examples of satire and personification from the story.

Comprehension Check:

4. Why does the artist place a mirror in front of the picture?

5. How does the cat explain the mirror to the other animals?

6. Which animal is the last to look in the mirror?

Extend Interpretations:

7. What if the moral at the end of the story did not come from the cat but from one of the other animals? Write the moral that the bear and the elephant might have announced at the conclusion.

8. Find and read a fable by Aesop, the most famous fable author. Give the title; then identify and record the satire, personification, and moral in this fable.

Creative Work:

9. Create a book cover for this "A Fable" by Twain. Be sure to include the title, author, and, of course, appealing artwork.

10. Write a fable. Be sure to include the important literary elements of a fable.

