

## 8th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

**Due: Monday, September 14, 2026**

### Red Kayak by Priscilla Cummings

Standards: 8.R.1.1-3 (character development, setting, plot and theme; perspective and point of view),  
8.R.3.1 (figurative language and symbolism),  
8.C.3.1 (analysis of narrative techniques)

Students will have access to IXL this summer and may use IXL to practice these standards.



#### **Synopsis**

First hailed as a hero for his dramatic water rescue of a little boy, thirteen-year-old Brady soon makes a discovery that puts him at the heart of a tragedy. Alone with his dark secret, Brady is forced to choose between his friends and the right thing. This book is full of mystery. You won't want to put it down!

**Book Purchase: Amazon:** [Red Kayak - Book Purchase](#)  
<https://tinyurl.com/33pnpfr>

To fully engage with the summer reading assignment, students are strongly encouraged to purchase a personal copy of the novel. Having a hard copy allows students to actively annotate the text by highlighting important passages, recording thoughts and questions, and identifying key literary elements. Annotation is an essential part of the learning process and will help students prepare for meaningful discussions, written responses, and classroom activities at the start of the school year.

#### **Note from Mrs. Caperna**

Please make sure you read the book. It is a short but interesting book, and I think you will enjoy it. The guided reading questions are organized by chapter, so answer them as you read along. Don't wait until you finish the book to answer the questions. This will make the task more difficult. We will be discussing the book in class during and it will be graded as a classwork grade. Make sure you are prepared. If you have any questions while you're reading, you may email me at [caperna.mary@franklin-academy.org](mailto:caperna.mary@franklin-academy.org).

*Enjoy your summer and the books!*

## Red Kayak Guided Reading Questions **Due: Monday, September 14, 2026**

**Directions:** As you read *The Red Kayak*, answer the following questions in complete sentences. **Your answers should be supported with details from the text (evidence).** **The assignment should be completed in a Google Doc and responses should be typed in blue.** Please be prepared to discuss the book in class.

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### Chapter 1 (8.R.1.2, 8.R.1.4, 8.R.3.1)

1. Who is narrating the story? What is he concerned about?
2. On page 5, it says, "*But it replays all the time. Like waves breaking on the narrow beach down at the river.*" What does the author mean by this?
3. Also on page 5 what do you think the author means when she writes, "*It's a pretty river, the Corsica. But it doesn't have a heart...*"

### Chapter 2 (8.R.1.3, 8.R.1.4, 8.V.1.1, K12.EE.3.1 )

4. How does the author show that the narrator is going back in time?
5. Who are J.T. and Digger?
6. On page 10 it says, "He and J.T. exchanged this look I didn't quite catch, and J.T. started laughing, too." What does the author mean by this?
7. At the end of the chapter what do you think Brady could be ashamed of?

### Chapter 3 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.3.1, 8.V.1.1, K12.EE.3.1)

8. Describe Brady's relationship with J.T. and Digger. Use evidence from the text to support your response.
9. Describe Brady's interactions with the DiAngelos.
10. How does the author set us up to think that Mr. DiAngelo is in the kayak? What impact does this have on the reader to learn who is in the kayak? How does it impact the plot?

### Chapter 4 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.2, 8.R.1.3, 8.V.1.1)

11. On page 22, how does the setting play a role in the search?
12. Describe how Brady was impacted by his sister's death.
13. On pages 26 and 27, what did Brady's conversation with his mother reveal?

**Chapter 5 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.3, 8.V.1.1)**

14. On page 35, what does Brady mean when he says, “I knew then I would never be the same person anymore.”

**Chapter 6 (8.R.1.1,8.R.3.1)**

15. What tone is in Brady’s voice when he talks about giving his legos to Ben? How do you know?

16. By the end of the chapter, the author has let us know a lot about what Brady is thinking. What does this tell the reader about what he is like as a person? What evidence supports this?

**Chapters 7 and 8 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.3)**

17. Come up with some theories as to why J.T. and Digger didn’t respond the way everyone else did at school.

18. On page 50, what internal conflict is Brady struggling with when he says, “Did I? Did I do everything I could?”

19. Why do you think Brady went back out on the water after he heard the news about Ben?

**Chapters 9 and 10 (8.R.1.1, 8.V.1.1)**

20. Why is Brady comparing Ben’s death to Amanda’s?

21. How could Brady and his father’s crabbing trip gone differently?

22. What are you noticing about Brady’s relationship with his parents? Analyze using evidence from the text.

23. Why do you think J.T. and Digger are acting this way towards Brady?

**Chapter 11 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.3, 8.R.2.3, 8.R.3.1)**

24. Why do you think Brady’s parents didn’t let him go to Amanda’s funeral? How would you have reacted to this?

25. Why do you think Brady’s parents keep telling him to move on? Why do you think he can’t?

**Chapter 12 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.3, 8.R.3.1)**

26. Explain what Brady’s flashback to dinner at the DiAngelo’s reveals.

27. On page 88, Brady says, “...and there I was digging holes.” What does he mean by this? Think both literally and figuratively.

**Chapters 13 and 14 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.2, 8.R.1.3, 8.V.1.1)**

28. What is giving Mrs. DiAngelo hope that life goes on? How do you know? (evidence)

29. Do you think Digger had something to do with sinking the kayak? Analyze.

30. Predict what will happen when Brady gets to Digger’s house?

**Chapters 15 & 16 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.3, 8.R.2.3, 8.R.2.4)**

31. Give 3 character traits for Digger. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
32. Why do you think Brady really told Mrs. DiAngelo that he could not work for her?
33. Predict what Brady will do with this new knowledge about T.J. and Digger.

**Chapters 17-21 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.2, 8.R.1.3, 8.V.1.1)**

34. Why does the author keep using flashbacks about J.T., Digger and Brady before all of this happened?
35. In what ways was Brady's trip to RI good for him?
36. What do you think about what Brady did with the drill?
37. Describe Brady's conversation with his mother about Amanda.

**Chapters 22 & 23 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.3)**

38. Explain how J.T. was when Brady ran into him. What led you to believe this? (evidence)
39. What internal conflicts are Brady dealing with? How do you know?
40. How does the setting play a role in Ch. 23.

**Chapter 23. (8.R.1.2)**

41. What are possible themes that you are thinking about so far in the book. Why?

**Chapters 24 & 25 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.3, 8.R.3.2, 8.R.3.4)**

42. Explain what happened at the lawyer's office.
43. What are Brady's fears?
44. How did Digger and J.T. act at the court hearing?
45. Analyze the irony of the money Brady gave to his parents.
46. Analyze the significance of what Ben said about Scar from the Lion King.

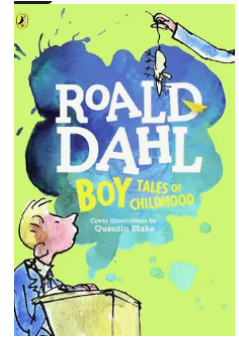
**Chapters 26-28 (8.R.1.1, 8.R.1.2, 8.R.3.2)**

47. How do J.T.'s lawyer describe him? Do you think that is an accurate description of him?
48. What are your thoughts on what Digger said when he addressed the court?
49. Do you think J.T. and Digger's sentence was appropriate?
50. Share theme(s) of the book. Analyze and use evidence from the text to support your answer.

## ADDITIONAL SUMMER READING BOOKS TO ENJOY!

### 1. Boy Tales of Childhood by Roald Dahl (nonfiction)

In *Boy*, Roald Dahl recounts his days as a child growing up in England. From his years as a prankster at boarding school to his envious position as a chocolate tester for Cadbury's, Roald Dahl's boyhood was as full of excitement and the unexpected as are his world-famous, best-selling books. Packed with anecdotes—some funny, some painful, all interesting—this is a book that's sure to please. (*Goodreads*)



### 2. Red Scarf Girl by Ji-Li Jiang (nonfiction)

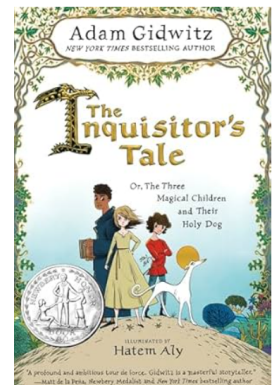
It's 1966, and twelve-year-old Ji-li Jiang has everything a girl could want: brains, popularity, and a bright future in Communist China. But it's also the year that China's leader, Mao Ze-dong, launches the Cultural Revolution—and Ji-li's world begins to fall apart.

Over the next few years, people who were once her friends and neighbors turn on her and her family, forcing them to live in constant terror of arrest. And when Ji-li's father is finally imprisoned, she faces the most difficult dilemma of her life. (*Goodreads*)



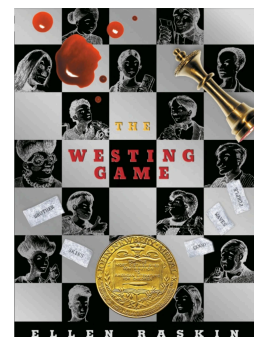
### 3. The Inquisitor's Tale by Adam Gidwitz (fiction)

1242. On a dark night, travelers from across France cross paths at an inn and begin to tell stories of three children. Their adventures take them on a chase through France: they are taken captive by knights, sit alongside a king, and save the land from a farting dragon. On the run to escape prejudice and persecution and save precious and holy texts from being burned, their quest drives them forward to a final showdown at Mont Saint-Michel, where all will come to question if these children can perform the miracles of saints.



### 4. The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin (fiction)

A bizarre chain of events begins when sixteen unlikely people gather for the reading of Samuel W. Westing's will. And though no one knows why the eccentric, game-loving millionaire has chosen a virtual stranger



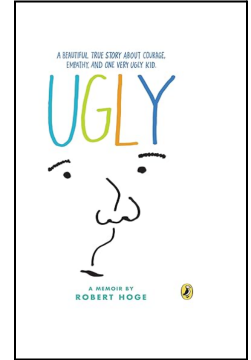
—and a possible murderer  
Sam Westing may be dead ... but that won't stop him from playing one last Game!

ig's for sure:

### 5. Ugly by Robert Hoge (nonfiction)

Robert Hoge was born with a giant tumour on his forehead, severely distorted facial features and legs that were twisted and useless. His mother refused to look at her son, let alone bring him home. But home he went, to a life that, against the odds, was filled with joy, optimism and boyhood naughtiness.

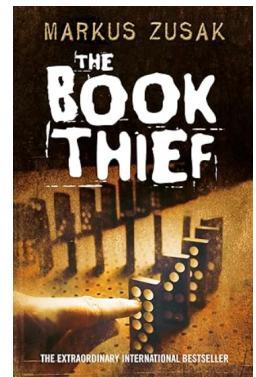
*Ugly* is Robert's account of his life, from the time of his birth to the arrival of his own daughter. It is a story of how the love and support of his family helped him to overcome incredible hardships. It is also the story of an extraordinary person living an ordinary life, which is perhaps his greatest achievement of all.



### 6. The Book Thief by Markus Zusak (fiction)

*When Death has a story to tell, you listen.*

It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement.



## LINKS TO AVAILABLE PDF COPIES OF SUGGESTED SUMMER READING BOOKS

Boy Tales of Childhood pdf: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/ensrv/qjap/>

The Inquisitor's Tale pdf: <https://online.flipbuilder.com/fdyv/norl/>

The Westing Game pdf: <https://fliphtml5.com/hgxwd/cagv/basic>

The Book Thief pdf: [https://fliphtml5.com/xpuzu/cieq/Book\\_thief/](https://fliphtml5.com/xpuzu/cieq/Book_thief/)

