

The Wednesday Wars Summer Reading Assignment

Gary D. Schmidt's novel, *The Wednesday Wars*, recounts ten months in the life of Holling Hoodhood, a 7th grader who is convinced that his teacher is out to get him. Not only is he stuck alone with her on Wednesday afternoons while the other students are at their respective church schools, but she is making him read the most **BORING** literature on the planet: the works of William Shakespeare.

The book itself is divided into chapters that correspond to the months of the school year, and Mrs. Baker, Holling's teacher, assigns him one of Shakespeare's plays to read each month. Holling comes to understand that there are real-life connections to these classic works of literature, and that the themes explored in each play have the potential to teach him about life.

Because most of you have probably not yet read Shakespeare, it is important to have a feel for the plot (what happens, including exposition, conflict, and characterization) and theme (underlying meaning; central idea or lesson) of each play. To this end, you will be watching short (five to ten minute) videos before each chapter or group of chapters, as detailed below. After viewing the video and reading the chapter(s), answer the associated questions in a Word document and email them to me no later than Friday, August 23. You do not need to rewrite the questions, but be sure that all short answers are written in paragraph form. You may email throughout the summer as you read or wait until you are finished with the entire book; however, **DO NOT** procrastinate and wait to read until right before school starts! We will spend the first week or two of the new school year reviewing, but if you have not read, you will have a difficult time keeping up. Any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me over the summer.

Happy Reading, and have a wonderful summer!

Mrs. Amy Huwel

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September - October

Before reading these chapters, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPbW-Zjg7rM> and view the video, *The Merchant of Venice*, to help you better understand the allusions to Shakespeare's play and how it parallels Holling's life. If this link is not working, go to YouTube and type in "The Merchant of Venice Short Quick Guide." Once you have viewed the video and read the chapters, answer the following questions.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. What church do Holling and his family attend on Sunday mornings?
(a) St. Adelbert's Catholic Church (b) Temple Beth-El (c) St. Andrew's Presbyterian
2. Mrs. Baker's family owns
(a) Baker Sporting Emporium (b) The Betty Baker Bakery (c) Baker & Baker Associates
3. Holling's dad watches _____ on television every night.
(a) Wheel of Fortune (b) Walter Cronkite (c) Johnny Carson
4. On the first day of school, what does Holling have for breakfast?
(a) a ham, cheese, and broccoli omelet (b) Cheerios (c) chocolate milk and Twinkies
5. Holling's English textbook is titled
(a) Grammar, Seventh Edition (b) English For You And Me (c) English Today
6. Holling and his classmates stored their things in
(a) the Coat Room (b) lockers (c) cubbies
7. Mrs. Baker's English lesson centered around
(a) subordinate conjunctions (b) adverbial clauses (c) sentence diagramming
8. During recess, Holling causes injury to
(a) Meryl Lee (b) Doug Swieteck (c) Doug Swieteck's brother
9. Holling was called to the principal's office because
(a) he caused a disturbance at recess (b) Mrs. Sidman was concerned about his math grade, (c) Mrs. Baker thought Holling would benefit from sitting in on Mrs. Harknett's math class

10. During afternoon announcements, we learn that Mrs. Baker's husband
(a) is being deployed to Vietnam (b) recently joined the 101st airborne division
(c) will soon return home from Vietnam

TRUE/FALSE

1. Mrs. Baker asked Holling to do chores in the classroom because she felt there was no point in teaching him something new that he'd have to hear again the following day.
2. While cleaning out the Coat Room, Holling threw away Doug Swieteck's stash that he was hiding to prepare for Number 166.
3. Doug Swieteck's brother returned to school healthy again after only ten days of observation.
4. Mr. Petrelli's hands were always blue from the ink he used to grade papers.
5. Mrs. Bigio, the cafeteria lady, baked a dozen trays of cream puffs for the Wives of Vietnam Soldiers.
6. Mrs. Baker let Charles have a cream puff after he finished her errands.
7. Holling's father did not approve of Holling's sister being a flower child.
8. Lieutenant Baker purchased Sycorax and Caliban as gifts for Mrs. Baker to use as classroom pets.
9. After Sycorax and Caliban escaped their cage, Mrs. Sidman and Mr. Petrelli came to help Holling and Mrs. Baker catch the rats.
10. Holling felt like he might die from boredom as he and Mrs. Baker read *The Merchant of Venice* together.

SHORT ANSWER

Reread pages 46-48, beginning with, "But it turned out that Mrs. Baker's strategy didn't work at all!" In paragraph form, explain how parts of *The Merchant of Venice* parallel what is happening in Holling's life this month. Be detailed and specific!

November - December

Before reading these chapters, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVsqjZxLqTY and view the video, *The Tempest*. If this link is not working, go to YouTube and type in "The Book Tutor The Tempest."

YES/NO

1. Was the moldy water stain on the ceiling of the Perfect Living Room as wide as a garbage can lid?
2. Did *The Tempest* turn out to be better than *The Merchant of Venice*?
3. In geography, did Mr. Petrelli announce "The Vietnam War and You" project?
4. Did Holling go to school early one morning because he needed a private place to practice Shakespeare curses?
5. Did Miss Violet of the Very Spiky Heels compliment Holling's singing voice and move him to sing with the sopranos?
6. Did Mrs. Baker give Holling a 300-question test on *The Tempest*?
7. Did Hoodhood and Associates get the contract for the Baker Sporting Emporium?
8. Did Mr. Goldman say, "What I should really need is a boy who knows Shakespeare"?
9. Did Mr. Goldman give Holling two dozen cream puffs absolutely free of charge?
10. Did Mrs. Bigio's husband return home safely from Vietnam?

MATCHING

Match each statement with the character who said it. Some will be used more than once.

a. Holling b. Mr. Goldman c. Holling's mother d. Meryl Lee e. Danny f. Mrs. Bigio

1. "Every boy should be so lucky as you, to play in a Shakespeare Company's Holiday Extravaganza, and with such a part!"

2. "No one from Camillo Junior High will be there. And even if they were, everyone will think it's cute."
3. "What's a batting average?"
4. "I never went to seventh grade. Where I come from, no boy went to seventh grade. We were all working in fields, digging and hoeing and digging and hoeing."
5. "Take it and eat it. You're not supposed to examine it."
6. "Why so sneaky? Are you playing a girl's part?"
7. "Suspicion is an unbecoming passion. Ariel is a warrior."
8. "I guess I don't need this (baseball) after all."
9. "You're waiting for another cream puff? Don't count on it this millennium."
10. "The gym is empty last period. She's giving us the afternoon off."

SHORT ANSWER

On pages 70-71, Holling and Mrs. Baker are having a conversation about happy endings. Reread the passage that begins with, "That afternoon..." and ends with, "It's just defeat." Summarize both of their opinions and tell why you think each of them feels the way they do (Hint: Think about what is happening in each of their lives in this chapter). Who do you agree with more, and why?

January

Before reading these chapters, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHZPve0b1c0> and view the video, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, to help you better understand the theme of this play and its connection to Holling's life. If this link is not working, go to YouTube and type in "The Book Tutor Macbeth."

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. On what day did Holling's picture from the Shakespeare play appear in the newspaper?
(a) New Year's Day (b) Christmas Day (c) Christmas Eve
2. What did Doug Swieteck's brother use to embellish the newspaper photo of Holling?
(a) gold glitter (b) yellow paint (c) purple sequins
3. What Shakespeare play are Holling and Mrs. Baker reading in January?
(a) *The Tempest* (b) *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (c) *Hamlet*
4. Mrs. Baker gave a cup of hot chocolate to (a) Holling (b) Mai Thi (c) Doug
5. Holling tells his father that he wants to attend
(a) military school (b) architect school (c) business school
6. The radiators were putting out so much heat that they were probably giving Mrs. Baker (a) 3rd degree burns (b) heat exhaustion (c) a tan
7. When Holling finally made it to the bathroom to take off what he needed to take off, the 8th grade boys were (a) hanging up photos of Ariel the Fairy (b) smoking (c) cheating on the test
8. After being struck by the school bus, where was Holling's injury?
(a) his back (b) his abdomen (c) his butt
9. Throughout the chapter, Holling's dad complains about the salaries of
(a) professional baseball players (b) politicians (c) competing architects
10. Who stayed with Holling while he waited at the hospital?
(a) Holling's sister and Mrs. Baker (b) Holling's mother and Holling's sister
(c) Mrs. Baker and Mr. Guareschi

SHORT ANSWER

A major theme of both this chapter and *The Tragedy of Macbeth* is vengeance. Reread pages 109 and 128-129 and explain how and why Holling is consumed by revenge. What does he learn about vengeance from reading *The Tragedy of Macbeth*?

February

Before reading these chapters, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z81wjUI3BvU and view the video, *Romeo and Juliet*. If this link is not working, go to YouTube and type in "Cliffs Notes Romeo and Juliet for Kids."

TRUE/FALSE

1. Both Holling and Holling's sister flushed their flowers down the toilet.
2. The first time Holling read *Romeo and Juliet*, he found it to be tragic and beautiful and lovely.
3. Holling convinced Meryl Lee to go out with him on Valentine's Day after reciting a Shakespeare quote.
4. For Valentine's Day, Danny planned to take out Mai Thi.
5. Mrs. Bigio baked Valentine cookies for all the classes at Camillo Junior High.
6. After the play, Holling and Meryl Lee went to Woolworth's, where Holling bought them Cokes.
7. Mr. Hoodhood and Mr. Kowalski were the only two architects competing for the new junior high school bid.
8. Holling told Mrs. Baker he'd rather be partners with Doug for sentence diagramming instead of Meryl Lee.
9. Before the school board made its final decision, Kowalski and Associates withdrew its bid for the new junior high school.
10. Mrs. Baker received a telegram stating that Lieutenant Baker was killed in action.

SHORT ANSWER

In paragraph form, explain how Holling's interactions with Meryl Lee and her family are similar to those of characters in *Romeo and Juliet*. Cite specific instances and include page numbers where you found these details!

March

Before reading these chapters, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgyAPrv3Oeg and view the video, *Julius Caesar*, to help you better understand the allusions to Shakespeare's play and how it parallels Holling's life. If this link is not working, go to YouTube and type in "Sparknotes Shakespeare Caesar."

YES/NO

1. Did Walter Cronkite read off the names of soldiers missing in action, including Lieutenant Baker?
2. Did Mr. Vendleri bring a mallet with him in case he needed a weapon while cleaning out the bulging ceiling tiles?
3. Did Mrs. Baker tell Holling that he was a soothsayer after he declared, "Beware the Ides of March?"
4. Did Holling's father approve of his sister working for the Bobby Kennedy campaign?
5. Did Mrs. Baker wear a pair of bright white tennis shoes while teaching Holling how to run like Jesse Owens?
6. Did Holling give Mrs. Baker teaching advice for her upcoming visit from the school board members?
7. Did Mrs. Baker reach into her lower desk drawer and pull out an Olympic silver medal?
8. Did Sycorax and Caliban fall into Mr. Bradbrook's lap?
9. Did Holling set a new record for the three-mile run for a Long Island school?
10. Did Danny dump his lunch tray on and break the nose of an 8th grader who made fun of Mai Thi?

SHORT ANSWER

In paragraph form, describe at least three "coincidences" or similarities that Holling sees between his life and the play, *Julius Caesar*. Include the page numbers where you found the information!

April

MATCHING

Match each statement with the character that said it. Each character will be used at least once but may be used more than once.

a. Holling b. Mrs. Baker c. Mr. Hoodhood d. Meryl Lee e. Danny f. Coach Quatrini

1. "It will be called Operation Pegasus. Now, someone tell me the meaning of the classical allusion."

2. "Finished. Done. Over. Washed up. Kaput. I told you he couldn't play for keeps. They'll announce it in a couple of weeks or so. No more Kowalski and Associates."

3. "I'll probably be moving. To my grandmother's house. In Kingston."

4. "Isn't there enough going on in the world that you shouldn't have to go into the city for a baseball game?"

5. "You can go up to sixty-five without getting a ticket. You drove a lot faster than this to the hospital."

6. "It's this Saturday, so you're all going to have to get up early and miss your cartoons. I feel really badly about that. So badly, I could cry. Boo-hoo."

7. "Don't think a rose and a coke are going to get you out of this."

8. "The whole world is going crazy, and no place is crazier than college. You'll stay at your job and be safe. You're staying home."

9. "Would you change with me if I had 113 and you had 25?"

10. "Holling. Pass those boys."

May

Before reading these chapters, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBleSUVheM and view the video, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, to help you better understand the allusions to Shakespeare's play and how it parallels Holling's life. If this link is not working, go to YouTube and type in "Cliffs Notes Hamlet."

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. During the month of May, Camillo Junior High celebrated (a) Atomic Bomb Awareness Month (b) Civil Rights Month (c) Vietnam Soldier Appreciation Month
2. As part of the government's drill procedures, students huddled under their desks for (a) ten minutes (b) twenty-five minutes (c) eighteen minutes
3. Dad came home with a brand new (a) Chevrolet truck (b) Ford Mustang convertible (c) Dodge station wagon
4. Holling's sister ran away to go find herself in (a) California (b) Canada (c) Florida
5. At recess, Meryl Lee, Mai Thi, and Holling listened to Danny practice for his (a) recital (b) bar mitzvah (c) confirmation
6. In the Coat Room, Mrs. Baker spilled (a) a bottle of rum (b) pilgrim cider (c) a jar of beets
7. Inside Saint Adelbert's, Holling and Mrs. Baker (a) lit a candle (b) prayed (c) lit a candle and prayed
8. The first night Holling's sister called him, she was in (a) Chicago (b) Minneapolis (c) San Diego
9. Who gave Holling a ride to the Port Authority? (a) Mr. Kowalski (b) Holling's mother (c) Mrs. Baker
10. At a counter in the Port Authority, Holling and Heather ate (a) hot dogs and fries (b) grilled cheese sandwiches and Cokes (c) liverwurst sandwiches and milkshakes

SHORT ANSWER

A major theme of the play *Hamlet* explores the idea of fate vs. free will. Reread pages 234-235 beginning with, "By the end of *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark...*" and ending with, "That's what I think Shakespeare was trying to say..." Explain what reading this play taught Holling about finding oneself, and what you think Holling's conclusion would be regarding fate vs. free will: Is our destiny written in the stars, or do we have the ability to change it? Be sure to back up your opinion with details from the chapter!

June

Before reading these chapters, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=9H7JLcoSkEA and view the video, *Much Ado About Nothing*, to help you better understand the allusions to Shakespeare's play and how it parallels Holling's life. . If this link is not working, go to YouTube and type in "The Book Tutor Much Ado About Nothing."

TRUE/FALSE

1. Mrs. Baker looked forward to the class camping trip each year.
2. Walter Cronkite talked about Lieutenant Baker's rescue on the evening news.
3. After hearing about Bobby Kennedy, Holling and Heather walked to Saint Adelbert's and lit candles.
4. Holling's hiking pack contained all of the utensils and four big cans of chili.
5. Holling helped Danny take all of the pots and pans down to the stream to wash them.
6. Mrs. Sidman scared all of the seventh graders with her story about a headless ghost.
7. A huge cloud of mosquitos followed Doug Swieteck as he returned from the path with the gentlemen sign.
8. At the bar mitzvah, Danny's miracle came after all.
9. Holling left the bar mitzvah with his father, mother, and sister.
10. Lieutenant Baker returned home on a Wednesday.

SHORT ANSWER

Reread pages 262-263, paying particular attention to what Mrs. Baker says about Shakespeare's character, Don Pedro, and the true definition of a comedy. In paragraph form, explain how she is using these things to teach Holling about his own life.