

June 2017

Dear Eighth Graders and Parents,

As part of our dedication to literacy, Grade 8 students are REQUIRED to read two books for their summer reading assignment. The first book, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon will be completed for your English class. A second novel of historical fiction will be assigned by Mrs. Glassberg and will be a Social Studies project.

After reading The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time you must complete the corresponding Summer Reading Packet. This packet includes various activities relating to the book including;

- 1.) A brief synopsis
- 2.) Interview questions
- 3.) Reading response questions
- 4.) Various inference questions
- 5.) A stream of consciousness essay

You may type or handwrite your responses but, please do so neatly. Spelling, punctuation, and neatness do count so make sure you proofread before you hand it in.

This assignment should be brought to school with you on the first day and will count as your very first grade entered into my grade book!

I hope you all have a wonderful summer and I am looking forward to an exciting year!

Happy reading,

Mrs. Goff

Parent signature

x \_\_\_\_\_





H) Christopher Boone has a psychological disability called Asperger's Syndrome, an off-shoot of Autism. The syndrome has been described in the following way:

### **Asperger's Syndrome**

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Asperger's syndrome was first described by a German doctor, Hans Asperger, in 1944 (one year after Leo Kanner's first paper on autism). In his paper, Dr. Asperger discussed individuals who exhibited many idiosyncratic, odd-like behaviors (see description below).

Often individuals with Asperger's syndrome have many of the behaviors listed below:

#### **Language:**

- lucid speech before age 4 years; grammar and vocabulary are usually very good
- speech is sometimes stilted and repetitive
- voice tends to be flat and emotionless
- conversations revolve around self

#### **Cognition**

- obsessed with complex topics, such as patterns, weather, music, history, etc.
- often described as eccentric
- I.Q.'s fall along the full spectrum, but many are in the above normal range in verbal ability and in the below average range in performance abilities.
- many have dyslexia, writing problems, and difficulty with mathematics
- lack common sense
- concrete thinking (versus abstract)

#### **Behavior**

- movements tend to be clumsy and awkward
- odd forms of self-stimulatory behavior
- sensory problems appear not to be as dramatic as those with other forms of autism
- socially aware but displays inappropriate reciprocal interaction

Researchers feel that Asperger's syndrome is probably hereditary in nature because many families report having an "odd" relative or two (*Does anyone else in this story fit this description?*). In addition, depression and bipolar disorder are often reported in those with Asperger's syndrome as well as in family members.

At this time, there is no prescribed treatment regimen for individuals with Asperger's syndrome. In adulthood, many lead productive lives, living independently, working effectively at a job (many are college professors, computer programmers, dentists), and raising a family.

Sometimes people assume everyone who has autism and is high-functioning has Asperger's syndrome. However, it appears that there are several forms of high-functioning autism, and Asperger's syndrome is one form.

Find five examples that would lead you to believe that Christopher has Asperger's Syndrome:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

D) Choose 3 questions from the ones listed below and comment on them on the next page. Circle the number(s) of the questions you are commenting on (below):

1. Given Christopher's aversion to being touched, can he experience his parents' love for him, or can he only understand it as a fact, because they tell him they love him? Is there any evidence in the novel that he experiences a sense of attachment to other people?
2. One of the unusual aspects of the novel is its inclusion of many maps and diagrams. How effective are these in helping the reader see the world through Christopher's eyes?
3. Christopher likes the idea of a world with no people in it [p. 2]; he contemplates the end of the world when the universe collapses [pp. 10–11]; he dreams of being an astronaut, alone in space [pp. 50–51], and that a virus has carried off everyone and the only people left are "special people like me" [pp. 198–200]. What do these passages say about his relationship to other human beings? What is striking about the way he describes these scenarios?
4. Think about what Christopher says about metaphors and lies and their relationship to novels [pp. 14–20]. Why is lying such an alien concept to him? In his hatred to lies, Christopher decides not to write a novel, but a book in which "everything I have written . . . is true" [p. 20]. Why do "normal" human beings in the novel, like Christopher's parents, find lies so indispensable? Why is the idea of truth so central to Christopher's narration?
5. Which scenes are comical in this novel, and why are they funny? Are these same situations also sad, or exasperating?
6. Christopher's conversations with Siobhan, his teacher at school, are possibly his most meaningful communications with another person. What are these conversations like, and how do they compare with his conversations with his father and his mother?
7. One of the primary disadvantages of the autistic is that they can't project or use intuition about what other people might be feeling or thinking—as illustrated in the scene where Christopher has to guess what his mother might think would be in the Smarties tube [pp. 115–16]. When does this deficit become most clear in the novel?

Does Christopher seem to suffer from his mental and emotional isolation, or does he seem to enjoy it?

8. Christopher's parents, with their affairs, their arguments, and their passionate rages, are clearly in the grip of emotions they themselves can't fully understand or control. How, in juxtaposition to Christopher's incomprehension of the passions that drive other people, is his family situation particularly ironic?
9. On pages 83–84, Christopher explains why he doesn't like yellow and brown, and admits that such decisions are, in part, a way to simplify the world and make choices easier. Why does he need to make the world simpler? Which aspects of life does he find unbearably complicated or stressful?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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J) The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time is written in a style of writing called “Stream of Consciousness” In this style, the writer writes everything that they are thinking at the moment, whether or not it does anything to move the plot along. Siobhon comments to Christopher that he doesn’t have to “write everything, only the interesting parts”, which explains why there is an appendix in the book answering the math problem.

One of the great Stream of Consciousness authors was Jack Kerouac, who wrote such novels as “On the Road”. Below is an excerpt of his writing:

*Great Chicago glowed red before our eyes. We were suddenly on Madison Street among hordes of hobos, some of them sprawled out on the street with their feet on the curb, hundreds of others milling in the doorways of saloons and alleys...*

*...We let out the hobos on this street and proceeded to downtown Chicago. Screeching trolleys, newsboys, gals cutting by, the smell of fried food and beer in the air, neons winking--'We're in the big town, Sal! Whoeee!'*

*First thing to do was park the Cadillac in a good dark spot and wash up and dress for the night. Across the street from the YMCA we found a redbrick alley between buildings, where we stashed the Cadillac with her snout pointed to the street and ready to go, then followed the college boys up to the Y, where they got a room and allowed us to use their facilities for an hour. Dean and I shaved and showered. I dropped my wallet in the hall. Dean found it and was about to sneak it in his shirt when he realized it was ours and was right disappointed...*

*...But we forgot that and headed straight for North Clark Street, after a spin in the Loop, to see the hootchy-kootchy joints and hear the bop. And what a night it was.*

*'Oh, man,' said Dean to me as we stood in front of a bar, 'dig the street of life, the Chinamen that cut by in Chicago. What a weird town--wow, and that woman in that window up there, just looking down with her big breasts hanging from her nightgown, big wide eyes. Whee. Sal, we gotta go and never stop going till we get there.'*

Write a Stream of Consciousness essay describing everything that you did up to this point today. Start from the time you got out of bed, up until the moment you read this sentence. While you are writing, make sure you record every thought that comes into your mind, whether it has anything to do with the story or not.

Once you have completed that, circle only the passages that “move the plot along” meaning, only the part of the story that are relevant to you getting out of bed, and getting here.

Can we learn additional thing about the author who writes in stream of consciousness or is it just boring chatter?

YES NO (Why) \_\_\_\_\_



