

new covenant schools

Summer Reading List: Grade 8

All 8th-grade students are **required** to read the following short stories by Washington Irving, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle.” (Please make sure you read the complete works. Many poetry books have only excerpts). The school library has copies of these to be checked out during the last week of school or later. They should also be readily available at the libraries and bookstores. Study questions are shown below, and students must turn in answers to these questions on the first day of school. **Answers must be in complete sentences.**

In addition, all 8th-grade students are **encouraged** to read one or more of the following books:

Watership Down by Robert Adams
The Yearling by Marjorie K. Rawlings
Smoky the Cow Horse by Will James
The Two Towers (Lord of the Rings) by J. R. R. Tolkien

Students will receive extra credit for reading any of these books if a short summary of the book is turned in at the beginning of the school year.

Study questions for “*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*” and “*Rip Van Winkle*”

“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

1. What is the mood of the story? Mention several words that Irving uses that leads you to determine the mood.
1. Who do the villagers believe the headless horseman is, and how did he lose his head?
2. What is Ichabod Crane’s job? What does he do to earn extra money?
3. Why do the women in the countryside think he is an important person? Address both the mothers and the young girls’ opinion of Crane.
4. Irving writes, “When he entered the house, the conquest of his heart was complete” (18). What does the rest of the paragraph tell us about why Ichabod liked Katrina?
5. What are two things Brom Bones does to get back at Ichabod for stealing Katrina?
6. Ichabod takes great care in his appearance as he gets ready for the party at Baltus Van Tassel’s. What is ironic about the horse he is riding as he starts off like a “knight in quest of adventures?”
7. What story does Brom Bones tell about his encounter with the headless horseman?
8. What is Ichabod’s mood when he leaves the party later that evening? What speculation does the author make as to what happened?

9. What happens when Ichabod tries to get across the bridge?
10. What four traces of the chase do the searchers find the next day?
11. When news of Ichabod is reported years later, what does the reader learn about why he left?
12. What makes it seem that Brom Bones knew something about what happened that night?
13. What did the people of the town believe happened that night?

“Rip Van Winkle”

1. What is the setting of the story? What details suggest when the story takes place?
2. What proof is offered that Rip is willing to work long and hard at some things? What sorts of work does Rip not like to do?
3. How would Rip respond to his wife’s complaints about him?
4. Where was the first option for Rip to go when he wanted to escape his wife? Why did he like the men he met there?
5. Where was Rip’s ultimate escape from his wife? Who would he take with him?
6. What is Wolf’s reaction when a voice is heard calling “Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!” ? What two emotions does Rip feel?
7. Where is Rip when he wakes up? What is the time of day and what does he think happened? What is he worried about?
8. When Rip returns to the village, what has changed about his appearance? What makes Rip certain that it must be the same village even though it looks very different?
9. What are two symbols of the newly created United States of America that Rip does not recognize?
10. What are two things people are talking about that make no sense to Rip?
11. When his daughter Judith tells what happened to her father, what question does Rip ask before he reveals who he is?
12. How had Dame Van Winkle died? How is that consistent with her character?
13. Where does Rip end up living and how does he spend most of his time?