



6th GRADE GEMS

6th Grade Book: *Ninth Ward* by Jewell Parker Rhodes. <https://a.co/d/7oj4qOC>

***Ninth Ward*, written by the *New York Times* bestselling and award-winning author Jewell Parker Rhodes, is a heartbreaking and uplifting tale of survival in the face of Hurricane Katrina.**

“Twelve-year-old Lanesha lives in a tight-knit community in New Orleans' Ninth Ward. She doesn't have a fancy house like her uptown family or lots of friends like the other kids on her street. But what she does have is Mama Ya-Ya, her fiercely loving caretaker, wise in the ways of the world and able to predict the future. So when Mama Ya-Ya's visions show a powerful hurricane--Katrina--fast approaching, it's up to Lanesha to call upon the hope and strength Mama Ya-Ya has given her to help them both survive the storm”.

Directions: After reading the novel, complete each assignment as instructed. Each assignment will be submitted to the Literature and Ethics teacher during the first week of school. These will be your first grades for the 2026-2027 school year. You will continue to discuss and have assignments related to your summer reading novel throughout the month of August.

Assignment 1: Character Development

Examine the character of Lanesha and how she evolves throughout the novel. In two or three well written paragraphs, discuss how specific events influence her growth and the decisions she makes. Provide examples from the text to illustrate her development.

And

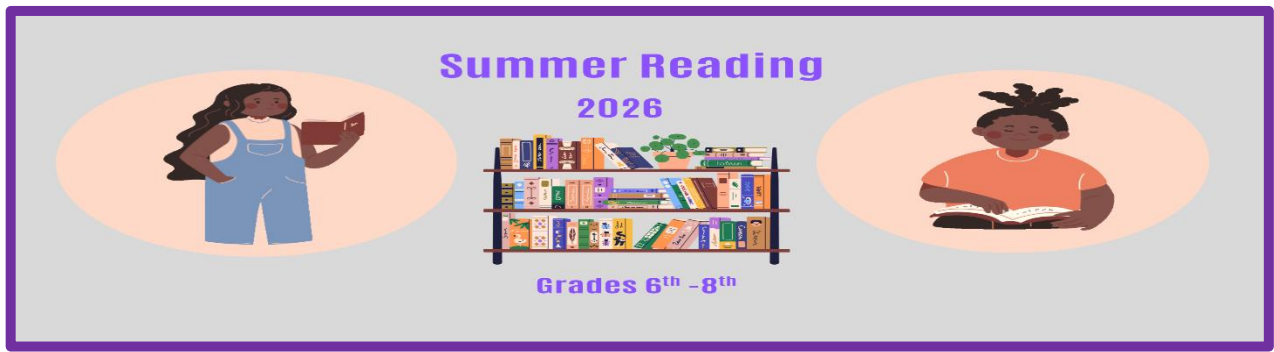
Assignment 2: Internal vs. External Change Journal

Create a two-column journal that tracks Lanesha's internal (emotional/mental) and external (behavioral/physical) changes throughout the story. Focus on how Hurricane Katrina and her relationships (Mama Ya-Ya, TaShon, etc.) shape her transformation. Create the table in Word with the headings: “Internal Change” and “External Change.”

Write **4 entries per column**, each with a brief description of the change and the **chapter or scene** it occurs in. Under each entry, write a **short paragraph (5-6 sentences)** explaining the cause of the change and what it reveals about Lanesha.

Formatting Requirements:

- Typed in Calibri, 11-point font, single-spaced within entries, with double-spacing between them.
- Use bullet points for the table entries but full paragraphs for explanations



7th GRADE GEMS

7th Grade Book: *Genesis Begins Again* by Alicia A. Williams. <https://a.co/d/bUvhiq1>

In Alicia D. Williams' "Genesis Begins Again," 13-year-old Genesis Anderson, who lives in Detroit, struggles with internalized racism and self-hatred stemming from her family's preference for lighter skin tones and her father's gambling addiction, leading to repeated evictions. Genesis keeps a list of 96 reasons why she dislikes herself, including her dark skin, her family's struggles, and her belief that she is to blame for their problems. The novel explores themes of colorism, addiction, and the importance of self-love as Genesis navigates these challenges and finds ways to accept herself and ultimately help her family.

Directions: After reading the novel, complete each assignment as instructed. Each assignment will be submitted to the Literature and Ethics teacher during the first week of school. These will be your first grades for the 2026-2027 school year. You will continue to discuss and have assignments related to your summer reading novel throughout the month of August.

Assignment 1: Author's Purpose and Point of View

Consider why the author chose to tell Genesis's story from the first-person point of view. How does this help readers better understand the emotional impact of colorism, family dysfunction, and self-hate?

- Write a two-paragraph response in Word. Use **12-point Georgia font**.
- Use Arial 12-point font, single-spaced with space between paragraphs.
- Paragraph 1: Explain the advantages of using the first-person POV in this novel.
- Paragraph 2: Provide two examples from the book where Genesis's internal thoughts help you understand her experience more deeply.

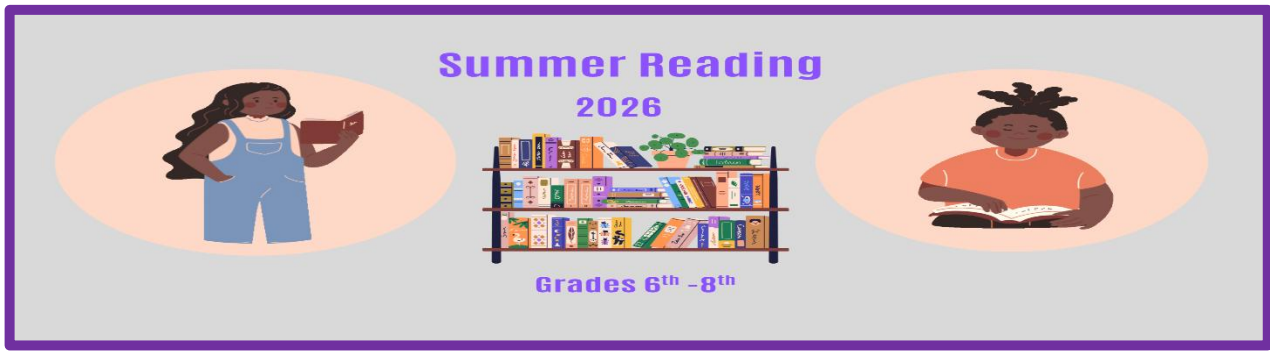
And

Assignment 2: Vocabulary in Context & Word Choice Analysis

Genesis often uses negative self-talk and emotionally charged language to describe herself. Choose five words or phrases from the novel that show how she views herself. Then, explain how these words reflect her mindset and how her word choices change by the end of the story.

How to Respond:

- Create a Word Chart Table in Word or Google Docs with 3 columns:
| Word/Phrase | Page Number | What It Reveals About Genesis |
- Write one paragraph (6–8 sentences) below the chart explaining how her self-perception evolves and how the author's word choice helps show this



8th GRADE GEMS

8th Grade Book: *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* (book one) by Ann Brashares

<https://a.co/d/e0Wusqi>

In Ann Brashares' *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, four inseparable best friends, Lena, Bridget, Tibby, and Carmen, discover a pair of jeans that magically fit all of them, leading them to send the pants back and forth to stay connected during their first summer apart. The pants become a symbol of their enduring friendship as they navigate different personal challenges, including family drama, love, and loss.

Directions: 8th grade girls have three summer reading assignments for *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*. After reading the novel, complete each assignment as instructed. Each assignment will be submitted to the Literature and Ethics teacher during the first week of school. These will be your first grades for the 2026-2027 school year. You will continue to discuss and have assignments related to your summer reading novel throughout the month of August.

Assignment 1 Theme Tracker with Reflection

Track the theme of *friendship and independence* across each girl's storyline. Explain how the theme is developed through their individual journeys, and how the magical jeans symbolize this shared experience.

- I. Create a **typed table in Microsoft Word** with each girl's name and a column for:
 - a. A key moment
 - b. How it supports the theme
 - c. A brief quote
- II. Follow up with a **one-paragraph reflection** (5–7 sentences) on how this theme relates to your own life or friendships.
- III. Use **12-point Georgia font**, single-spaced within the chart and paragraph, double-space between sections.

Assignment 2: Theme Tracker – Friendship Across Distance

The novel explores the theme of friendship that endures separation. How do the girls maintain their bond despite being apart? Choose **two scenes** that show how their relationship grows stronger even when they're not physically together. Explain how these moments help develop the theme.

- I. Write **one paragraph per scene** (two total), typed in Microsoft Word.
- II. Use **12-point Georgia font, single-spaced**, with double spacing between paragraphs.
- III. Highlight the theme using **textual details or paraphrased moments** from the book.

Assignment 3: Symbolism of the Pants

The traveling pants are more than just a piece of clothing \they symbolize something important. What do the pants represent to the girls individually and as a group? How does the shared object strengthen the plot and connect the characters' personal journeys?

- I. Write **two concise paragraphs** in Microsoft Word.
- II. Use **12-point Georgia font, single-spaced** with line spacing between paragraphs.
- III. Include at least **one example** from the story for each paragraph to support your analysis.