



SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT: *The Pigman* Journal

Due: First day of class~

Point value: 50 pts (one-half of a quiz grade)

Have you ever wondered what the summer would be like without dynamic, stimulating, and **required** summer reading? Good news: you don't have to! Incoming eighth graders are required to read one novel this summer: ***The Pigman* by Paul Zindel**. **The first major writing assignment of the year will focus on this novel.** There is something in this book for everyone: *romance, tragedy, teenage strife, betrayal, peer pressure, risk and reward!* So kick back in your beach chair and enjoy~ See you in the fall!

THE PIGMAN:

Throughout *The Pigman*, Paul Zindel explores issues of trust and betrayal, youth and old age, individuality and conformity, as well as the roles that parents, friends, and others play in our lives. Although the story is set during the late 1960's, a time when drastically shifting social norms and controversy surrounding the Vietnam War helped to create an atmosphere of rebelliousness against authority, the novel continues to address the many pressures facing young people today.

While you will notice several prominent themes surface throughout the novel, the various layers of trust and truth emerge as a primary focus. As an unlikely relationship develops between our teenage protagonists and the Pigman, Zindel implores his readers to critically consider the following questions:

Whom do we trust?

How do we determine what is true?

Who/what shapes the person we become?

What drives us to betrayal?

JOURNAL: Along with your reading, you are required to keep a journal. The text has been broken down for you into six parts. Most sections include *at least one analytical* and one **personal** prompt. Respond to each question in complete sentences and complete detail. In order to answer each prompt sufficiently, you will need to **consider all parts** of the question.

FORMAT: Your response for each prompt must be between 5-8 sentences long. You are *not limited* to 8 sentences, however, and should feel free to write as much as you want on each topic. You may either neatly write your responses (in standard black or blue ink) in a **composition notebook** with your name and the title "The Pigman Journal" on the cover, or **type** your entries in **Times New Roman** or **Ariel font size 12, double-spaced**. Include your full name at the top of the first page, and label and date each entry accordingly. **You do not need to rewrite the prompt.** See the model below for clarification:

The Pigman Journal

John Smith

Chapters 1-3: 7/5/08

Analysis: John and Lorraine are...

Personal: I picture a person...

Chapters 4-5: 7/18/08

ASSESSMENT: Your grade for this assignment will be based on the completeness and thoroughness of your responses. Please be sure to **consult format and length requirements**. Remember: your journal is **due on the first day of class**. I look forward to reading your responses!

JOURNAL ENTRIES:

Chapters 1-3

Analysis: Compare and contrast John and Lorraine. How are they the same and how are they different? How do they seem to feel about each other?

Personal: Close your eyes and picture a person you consider to be “old.” Write a description of that person. How does he or she look, move, talk, act, feel? What kinds of problems does he or she have? Close your eyes again, and imagine what you hope to be like when you are old. Write a description of how you see yourself. How do you look, move, act, feel? What kinds of problems do you have?

Chapters 4-5

Analysis: Were you surprised when John and Lorraine accepted money from Mr. Pignati? In order to explain your answer, consider both characters’ personalities. Perhaps your response is different for each character.

Personal: In chapter 4, Lorraine says that Norton is a *social outcast*. What does she mean? Based on your own experience, what do you think constitutes a social outcast?

Chapters 6-7

Analysis: What does John discover about Conchetta Pignati at the end of chapter 7? Why do you think the Pigman lied?

Personal: Can you see yourself befriending a man like Mr. Pignati and spending time in his home without your parents’ permission? Why or why not?

Chapters 8-9

Analysis: Why do John and Lorraine enjoy being with the Pigman? Is it just because he buys them things? In order to explain your answer, consider both characters’ relationships with their own parents.

Chapter 10-12

Analysis: What confession do John and Lorraine make to the Pigman? Why do you suppose they decide to tell the truth? The Pigman responds with his own confession. What is it and why do you suppose he decides to confess at this time?

Chapters 13-15

Personal: What was your gut reaction when you discovered that John and Lorraine were throwing a party at the Pigman’s house? Explain your answer.

Analysis: Pick one of the following questions:

- Why do you suppose the Pigman agrees to meet John and Lorraine after what they did? Does this mean that he has forgiven them?
- How do you interpret the last few lines of the novel: “*They build their own cages, we could almost hear the Pigman whisper, as he took his children with him.*”
- Who is responsible for the Pigman’s death? Explain your answer.

