

# Honors English 9 Summer Reading Prompts:

## DUE TO A226 ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL REGARDLESS OF WHICH SEMESTER YOU HAVE HONORS ENGLISH 9!

**Directions:** READ THIS ENTIRE ASSIGNMENT CAREFULLY. Then, read *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare as well as the following Sherlock Holmes short stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:

- *A Scandal in Bohemia*
- *The Red-Headed League*
- *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*
- *The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb*
- *The Adventure of the Empty House*
- *The Final Problem*

Following the structure below, write a 5 paragraph essay in response to **TWO** of the four prompts listed. You are expected to write to the best of your ability.

\*\*You do not need to bold, underline, italicize your essays according to the structure; I only did that so you knew which part was which if you needed to look at an example.

### Introduction:

- **Attention grabber (3 sentences)**
- *Bridge (1 sentence)*
- Thesis statement (1 sentence)
- Analysis(2-5 sentences)
- Transition (1 sentence)

### Body Paragraph 1:

- **Topic sentence (1 sentence)**
- *Supporting details (2-5 sentences)*
- Text evidence
- Analysis (2-5 sentences)
- Transition (1 sentence)

### Body Paragraph 2:

- **Topic sentence (1 sentence)**
- *Supporting details (2-5 sentences)*
- Text evidence

### Body Paragraph 3:

- **Topic sentence (1 sentence)**
- *Supporting details (2-5 sentences)*
- Text evidence
- Analysis (2-5 sentences)

### Conclusion:

- **Restated thesis (1 sentence)**
- *Recap of main points (2 sentences for each point)*
- Final thought (1 sentence)

## Prompts:

1. Think about the idea of suspense. Authors frequently hold their audiences in suspense by manipulating the way a reader interprets their writing through the author's specific word choice. Analyze how both William Shakespeare and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle incorporate suspense into their works and how that affects the audience as they read. Use examples from the text to justify your answer.
2. Consider the setting of each work (Holmes short stories are always set in Victorian London, where Holmes and Watson live, but typically the setting varies as the stories develop—for the purpose of this question, I'm asking you to consider Victorian London). How do each of the settings influence the events in the stories? Choose one Sherlock Holmes short story to compare to *Romeo and Juliet*, which is set in Verona, Italy during the 1300s. Remember, setting refers to time period as well as location. You should reference both throughout your essay. Use examples from the text to justify your answer.  
**\*\*Note: you may need to do some research on the social norms and trends during both time periods to thoroughly answer this question.**
3. In both *Romeo and Juliet* and the Sherlock Holmes short stories, characters rely on another for guidance. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo relies on Friar Laurence, and Juliet relies on the Nurse. In the Holmes stories, Watson relies on Holmes's intuition and intellect to guide them through the mystery (it could also be argued that the person hiring Holmes and Watson also rely on both to solve their problem). Analyze the relationships between each mentor and mentee. How do these dynamics serve to develop the characters throughout the stories? Use examples from the text to justify your answer.
4. Part of *Romeo and Juliet's* lure is the thinly veiled plot that is apparent to some characters but hidden from others. Sherlock Holmes's profession revolves around solving mysteries to which others seem oblivious. If Sherlock Holmes were investigating the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, who would he find guilty? Why? Remember to reference Holmes's character traits, traits displayed by characters in the play, and plot events from the play. Use examples from the text to justify your answer.

**\*\*Before beginning these responses, please read over my example response. My response is coded the way the components are coded above. Your responses do not need to be coded like mine, but they must include the same components. If you have **ANY** questions, please email me at [stanekmr@pcam.org](mailto:stanekmr@pcam.org). I would much rather you ask me for clarification than risk doing the assignment incorrectly.**

**\*\*Note:** my example essay is a response to *Romeo and Juliet* as well as *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli. Yours will be in response to *Romeo and Juliet* and the Sherlock Holmes short stories.

## **Example Response:**

**Prompt:** Contrast Romeo from *Romeo and Juliet* and Leo from *Stargirl*.

**Can teen love be considered genuine? Perhaps young love can be regarded as legitimate if both parties spend the time to get to know each other and truly develop feelings. However, young love can also be misconstrued as lust or simple obsession. The difference falls in the maturity level of the people involved and the depth of their feelings. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and in Jerry Spinelli's *Stargirl*, both male love interests—*Romeo and Leo*—fall in love. Romeo establishes love based on superficiality, whereas Leo's love originates more realistically.**

**In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare's character Romeo falls in love quickly. At first, Romeo is head over heels in love with a girl named Rosaline. However, as the story unfolds, Romeo meets Juliet, instantly forgets about Rosaline, and is "in love" with Juliet the moment he sees her. While *Romeo and Juliet* are considered to be victims of "love at first sight," the fact remains that Romeo falls immediately "in love" with Juliet when he sees how beautiful she is. Romeo's impulsive love is ridiculed by Friar Laurence in Act II, scene iii, when he says:**

Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here!

Is Rosaline that thou didst love so dear,

So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies

Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.

Shakespeare's intention was for his audience to see Romeo's superficial nature. By using Friar Laurence to point out Romeo's sudden change of heart, the accusation becomes much more believable, since it is coming from the objective Friar's point of view. Clearly, Romeo is being accused of loving hastily. Instead he values only simple appearance rather than getting to know Juliet and loving her for the person she is. On the other hand, in contrast with Romeo's immediate change of heart, Spinelli's Leo takes his time falling in love with Stargirl.

**In Jerry Spinelli's *Stargirl*, the protagonist, Leo, finds himself falling in love slowly but deeply.** *Stargirl makes quite an impact on Leo, and he can't help but be intrigued by her, even at the dismay of the rest of the student body. While Leo spends a lot of time being self-conscious and hyperaware of his peers, his love for Stargirl is strong enough to subdue the others' opinions to nothingness. Leo shows his deepening emotions by describing Stargirl in an increasingly poetic manner when he says, "She was elusive. She was today. She was tomorrow. She was the faintest scent of a cactus flower, the flitting shadow of an elf owl."* By comparing Stargirl metaphorically to things that can be seen and felt but not touched, Leo begins to tap into Stargirl's truly mysterious nature. The reader can not only learn about but also feel Leo falling slowly in love with who Stargirl truly is. Unlike Romeo with Juliet, Leo takes the time to get to know and honestly appreciate Stargirl for each and every one of her quirks. *In addition to Leo's unhurried emotional development, he also contrasts with Romeo's maturity level.*

**Leo shows a much more mature persona than Romeo, even though they are both around the same age.** *Leo's maturity level allows him to see and appreciate Stargirl for everything she is and everything she is not. It enables their love to be realistic and age appropriate. However, Romeo's lack of maturity pushes him to extremes with Juliet. For example, Leo recounts his relationship with Stargirl by saying:*

She reached out and tweaked my cheek the way my grandmother would and said, "What's up, cutie?" I grabbed her, right there outside the lunchroom in the swarming mob. I didn't care if others were watching. In fact, I hoped they were. I grabbed her and squeezed her. I had never been so happy and so proud in my life.

Clearly the reader can see how enthralled Leo is with Stargirl. The two show legitimate emotion toward each other. However, Romeo's immaturity and sharp focus on beauty rather than character is emphasized when he first sees Juliet. In Act I, scene v, Romeo says, "Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night." Romeo lays eyes on Juliet across the room and immediately thinks he is in love; he also immediately falls

out of love with Rosaline, who he was pining for mere minutes prior. Romeo’s immense immaturity shines through by not even being interested in getting to know Juliet before declaring that he loves her—without ever even speaking to her.

**Romeo’s superficiality directly contrasts with Leo’s sincerity.** *Not only does Romeo base his love solely on appearance, but he also falls in love unrealistically fast. Leo, on the other hand, falls in love with Stargirl slowly and deeply. He gets to know her and love her for exactly who she is rather than what she looks like. Leo’s maturity is displayed through his approach to finding and sustaining love. Romeo opposes Leo’s advancement by showing his intense immaturity through his “love at first sight” approach, which is truly more like “lust at first sight.”* Although the two are comparable in age, only Leo’s love is genuine, while Romeo’s love remains insincere.

## Grading Rubric:

**\*\*adapted from PDE Constructed Response Rubric**

25	15	5	0
The response provides a clear, complete, and accurate answer to the task.	The response provides a partial answer to the task.	The response provides a minimal answer to the task.	The response is totally incorrect or irrelevant or contains insufficient information to demonstrate comprehension.
The response provides relevant and specific information from the passage.	The response provides limited information from the passage and may include inaccuracies.	The response provides little or no information from the passage and may include inaccuracies <b>OR</b> the response relates minimally to the task.	
The response accurately follows the given essay outline.	The response partially follows the given essay outline.	The response barely follows the given essay outline.	
The response is impeccably written with minimal or no grammatical errors.	The response is well-written with multiple grammatical errors.	The response is poorly written <b>OR</b> too many grammatical errors impede the reader’s understanding.	

**Total: \_\_\_\_\_/100**