

## 8th Grade Summer Reading Guide

Brownell Talbot's 8<sup>th</sup> graders are asked to read three novels over the summer: S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The following considerations and questions are provided to guide the students' reading to give some direction to their efforts toward annotating the texts.

### *Animal Farm*

Orwell wrote *Animal Farm* as an allegory which is a story where fictional characters and events represent characters and events from the real world. This novel is regarded as an excellent primer for students who are exploring the literary genre' of allegory. *Animal Farm* is an allegory of Soviet Russia in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the historical characters and forces which were involved. There are numerous websites devoted to the relationship between *Animal Farm* and the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rise of Soviet Communism so students may want to spend a few minutes with one of these websites to orient themselves to this important component of 20<sup>th</sup> Century history.

When reading consider...

- What/who do each of the animals on the farm represent?
- How is the animals' access or lack of access to knowledge central to the events of the story?

*The Outsiders* was published in 1967 when the author was 17 years old. Its appeal stems primarily from the 15-year-old narrator whose narrative voice is starkly genuine. When reading this novel consider...

- Which events and scenes in the novel support the idea that the book is about the loss of innocence?
- How do the characters in the novel help the reader to reimagine the definition of family?

*To Kill a Mockingbird* will be treated in a 4-week unit of study. I recommend that, of the 3 books required, you read this one last. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960 during the Civil Rights Movement and is credited with helping raise awareness of racial injustice in America. When reading it consider...

- What scenes/events in the novel connect it to the Civil Rights Movement?
- If the novel teaches lessons, what lessons can be drawn from it?