

8th Grade ELA/SS Summer Reading Project

Dear Parents/Caretakers,

First off, congratulations on your children reaching 8th Grade! It has been a pleasure working with them as they develop into young adults, and being there to present and guide them through quality academic material which helps expand and hone their written and critical thinking skills. We look forward to the upcoming year, and the opportunities it presents.

As learning isn't just confined to the classroom, but instead is a continuous, year-long process, we've collaborated with each other to create a summer reading and writing project which will both develop students' critical analysis skills and content knowledge. The intent for this project is to help ease students into the expectations of 8th grade level work, while also providing them an engaging learning experience to help keep their minds active during the summer break.

For this project, students will need to acquire a copy of *Rifles for Watie* by Harold Keith, and will also be provided a work packet to complete which corresponds to the novel. *Rifles for Watie* is widely available at all public libraries, and for purchase online (both new, used, and as an ebook). These worksheets will be due the first day of class, and material from the book will be discussed in both ELA and Social Studies.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email us at your convenience. Thank you for your time, and have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

Ms. Benkert and Mr. Metzling

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Name:
Holy Child Jesus Catholic Academy

Summer Work: Rifles for Watie by Harold Keith

Directions: Answer all Questions

Chapters 1 and 2

Vocabulary:

A feist (pg. 3) is a small dog with a mixed ancestry; a synonym is mongrel. Think: What is an antonym (a word with an opposite meaning) for feist?

Questions:

1. For what was Kansas Famous?

2. Mrs. Bussey called Kansas an erratic land (pg. 2). (The word erratic means uncertain.)
To what did Mrs. Bussey compare Kansas?

3. How did Jeff feel about Abraham Lincoln (at first)?

4. How did listening to Lincoln change Jeff's life?

5. What did Jeff do because "obedience was strong within him" (pg 10)?

Chapters 3-5

6. What is the problem with Jeff's name?

7. Why didn't he say his name was Jefferson Bussey or Jeff Bussey?

8. Think: Why didn't Jeff, David, and John understand the command to fix bayonets?

**Read the background information in the box:

At the beginning of the Civil War, President Lincoln's main goal was to preserve the Union (not to end slavery). Several developments gradually led Lincoln to make the war a fight against slavery:

- 1) Some Union commanders freed enslaved people (without the President's permission) in territory they had conquered.
- 2) Black leaders and abolitionists encouraged the focus on slavery.
- 3) When the war was going badly for the Union, Lincoln hoped to strengthen the efforts in the North and weaken them in the South by fighting against slavery.

Chapters 6-8

9. What was different about Missouri (compared to Kansas)?

10. What problem did Jimmy Lear face?

11. What happened when Jeff fired off his gun (to clean it)?

12. What did Jeff wear in Chapter 7?

13. Describe the Union uniform that the Kansas Volunteers received in Chapter 8.

14. Explain what happened to Jeff at the Battle of Wilson's Creek.

15. How did the Union army fare?

16. What duty did Jeff have to perform after the battle?

17. How was Sparrow killed?

18. Who did Jeff think killed Sparrow?

19. On whom did Clardy blame Sparrow's death?

Chapters 9-11

20. Describe how rebel families were punished for their husbands' acts.

21. Often Jeff didn't act like the other men. Why did he act differently?

22. The night after Jeff's conversation with David Gardner, he had a hard time sleeping. Why?

23. What helped him feel better?

24. What was the mission of Weer's army?

27. Joe Grayson told Jeff the story of the Trail of Tears. Jeff asked the question: "How could the U.S. have done such a terrible thing?" What is the answer to that question?

Chapters 12-14

28. What propaganda was being spread?

29. How did Jeff feel about being "decorated" with the Medal of Honor?

30. How did Noah feel about the situation?

Chapters 15-17

31. What song did Captain Clardy ask Bill to sing?

32. Think: Why did the captain ask Bill to sing?

33. In Chapter 14 (pg 172-near the end of the chapter) Jeff thought about how stupid the war was. To him the issues seemed all mixed up. Refer back to Chapter 14: What was mixed up?

34. What happened in Chapter 16 (2 things) that could be added to a list of crazy, mixed up things?

35. In Chapter 17 Jeff had no idea of surrendering because surrendering meant facing three unpleasant things. Complete the sentence with three phrases:

Surrender meant _____,
_____, and
_____.

Chapters 18-20

36. What did Jeff think of the Waite men during breakfast?

37. Describe how rebel "coffee" was made.

38. What did Jeff think of the coffee?

39. What was Jeff afraid of as he saw Bostwick drinking from his canteen?

40. Explain what happened when Jeff gave his complete name to the Major.

44. Why were the men in Watie's group fighting?

45. Why was Jeff fighting?

46. What did Jeff like about the Watie men?

47. Why would Jeff miss Heifer?

48. Why didn't Jeff have to go through the ordeal of firing on his own troops?

49. Why was it so hard for Jeff to destroy Union money?

50. What helped him make the decision to throw the bank notes overboard?

51. What did Jeff take from the Union steamboat? Why did he take these things?

52. What was the greatest disaster of the war to the Union army in Indian country?

53. At the end of Chapter 22, Jeff had to make the decision. Think: What influenced him to go back to the Union Army?

Chapters 24-25

54. Jeff prayed hard when the rebels were close; what happened?

Think: Why did this happen?

55. When Jeff and his friends traveled home, they discover that “everything” had changed since 1862. Describe the changes.
