

# Summer Reading Grade 8

## *Wednesday Wars*

Gary D. Schmidt

### About the Book

*The Wednesday Wars* is a compelling story about a teenage boy's mishaps and adventures over the course of the 1967–68 school year in Long Island, New York. Holling Hoodhood, a student at Camillo Junior High, must spend Wednesday afternoons with his teacher, Mrs. Baker. She doesn't like Holling—he's sure of it. Why else would she make him read the plays of William Shakespeare outside of class? But everyone else has bigger things to worry about, like the war in Vietnam raging and the deaths of Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy. Holling is also experiencing turmoil at home. His father wants him and his sister to be on their best behavior- the success of his business depends on it. But how can Holling stay out of trouble when he has so much to contend with? As fate sneaks up on him again and again, Holling finds motivation in the most unexpected places and musters up the courage to embrace his destiny, in spite of himself. Gary Schmidt's first-person narration cleverly captures Holling Hoodhood's progression from an angst-filled yet innocent boy, to a wiser, self-aware young man.

### Assessment: Socratic Seminar

#### What is a Socratic Seminar?

Socrates, a classic Greek philosopher, was convinced that the surest way to attain reliable knowledge was through the practice of disciplined conversation based on questioning, listening, and answering. In a Socratic Seminar, participants seek deeper understanding of complex ideas in a text through thoughtful discussion.

#### Task:

To prepare for the Summer Reading Socratic Seminar, you will be actively reading *The Wednesday Wars* by Gary Schmidt and gathering evidence from the text that will help you respond to the 4 questions in this packet.

#### Directions:

- Complete each graphic organizer by providing direct evidence from the text with **citations** (author's last name and page number in parenthesis) in response to each of the questions.
- Be sure to explain how **each quote** answers the question.
- You should be thinking about the questions **as you read** the novel. Keep track of potential quotes with post-its as you read.
- You must work **independently** on this packet, as it will count for a large portion of your grade. With that said, be mindful of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and be sure to write in complete sentences.

**This packet is due the first week you return to school.**

**Topic for Discussion:**

*In what ways does Holling grow by the end of the book? What does he learn? How does he change?*

**Evidence**

*4 quotes with citation*

**Explanation**

*How does **each** piece of evidence respond to the question?*

**Topic for Discussion:**

*How does Holling relate the Shakespearean plays he reads to his own life?*

**\*HINT: Find quotes that affect Holling deeply and directly reference Shakespeare's plays/characters.**

<p><b>Evidence</b> <i>4 quotes with citation</i></p>	<p><b>Explanation</b> <i>How does each piece of evidence respond to the question?</i></p>

**Topic for Discussion:**

*Holling states, "When gods die, they die hard" (Schmidt 93). What "gods" or idols "die" throughout the book?*

**HINT:** Be sure to explain the meaning of the statement and how it applies to each "god" referenced. You may use a reference to Mickey Mantle for only ONE of the quotes.

<p><b>Evidence</b> <i>4 quotes with citation</i></p>	<p><b>Explanation</b> <i>How does each piece of evidence respond to the question?</i></p>

**Topic for Discussion:** *Does the author do a good job of describing the problems faced by seventh graders (friendship, bullying, parents, siblings, teacher expectations)? Explain why or why not for EACH quote.*

<b>Evidence</b> <i>4 quotes with citation</i>	<b>Explanation</b> <i>How does each piece of evidence respond to the question?</i>