

GRADE 8 ENGLISH STUDY GUIDE

All incoming eighth grade students will be required to read the following books for English class. Reading must be completed before the first day of school.

***And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie**

***Children of the River* by Linda Crew**

The Reading Activities Packet for each novel **must be turned in the first day of school**. Write your answers neatly in **ink** on the pages provided in the packet.

Additionally, an objective test (multiple choice/true-false) will be given on the novels during the first week of school.

Be sure to annotate your novels, underlining major characters and events.

And Then There Were None

Dame Agatha Christie was born in Devon, England, in 1890, and died in England in 1976. While working as a nurse during World War I, she began writing detective fiction, which is the genre most associated with her to this day. *And Then There Were None* was written in 1939, ending the decade with one of Christie's most brilliant deceptions. She once stated, "It was so difficult to do that the idea fascinated me." Her works have sold more than 100 million copies, have been translated into more than 100 languages, and have been made into several successful films.

A very private woman, Agatha Christie was a genius at puzzles and plots. The shy Agatha, at her eightieth birthday party, told a guest, "The reason I began to write more than sixty years ago was in order to avoid having to talk to people." Agatha Christie perfected the mystery novel. Christie said of her work, "I regard my work as of no importance - I've simply been out to entertain." How well she entertains!

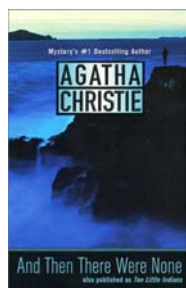
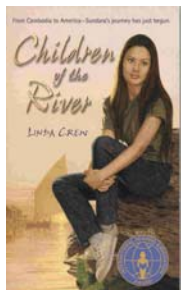
Children of the River

From Linda Crew's web site: http://www.lindacrew.com/children_of_the_river_55440.htm

"I'm not one of those people who grew up always knowing she wanted to write. I did always like to read, though. Until my sophomore year of college I never thought of being a writer, but, looking back, it's interesting to see how many of my school assignments were written as fictionalized stories or plays.

"I live with my husband on a small farm in Corvallis, Oregon. In 1980, a Cambodian family came to work for us during harvest. As we became friends with them and heard about their escape from Cambodia in 1975, I began to realize that every Cambodian refugee in the United States probably had an equally fascinating story.

"I knew nothing about the history and culture of Cambodia, so I spent a year in research before I ever started writing the first rough draft of the book. I read everything I could find on the subject and interviewed Cambodian refugees as well as those who had worked with them. Their stories gave me many plot ideas and details for the book. The manuscript was written and rewritten several times over the next few years, as with each draft I tried to improve it. Of course I had hoped that the book would be immediately accepted by a publisher, but this was not the case. *Children of the River* was **rejected sixteen times** before it was finally accepted by Delacorte Press in the spring of 1987, to be published in 1989. This shows how difficult it can be for a new writer to break into publishing! It also shows, though, how persistence is sometimes rewarded."



Don't forget to annotate (mark up and take notes) as you read. You may want to keep a reading log or journals as you read to keep characters and events clear.

(Materials adapted from The Center for Learning: *Murder on the Orient Express/And Then There Were None*)

READING ACTIVITIES PACKET for *And Then There Were None*

Complete the following sections in complete sentences.

1. **Setting:** Where and when does the story take place? Explain fully with specific details from the novel.

2. **Problem:** What is the main problem in the story? Is the problem internal (mental/emotional) or external (physical)? Support your answer with specific details from the novel.

3. **Climax:** What is the turning point in the story? Explain your answer with specific details from the novel.

4. **Resolution:** How is the problem solved? Explain what happened using specific details from the novel.

As you read, fill in what you suspect to be the motives for each of the following characters. You may wish to circle the suspect you feel is the mastermind of the crime (before you finish the book). When you have discovered the true killer, explain in the blanks provided whether he or she was justified in killing the suspects.

Suspect	Motive	Justification
Dr. Armstrong		
Emily Brent		
Mr. Blore		
Vera Claythorne		
Anthony Marston		
Mr. Justice Wargrave		
General Macarthur		
Captain Phillip Lombard		
Fred Narracott		
Mr. Rogers		
Mrs. Rogers		
Other		

READING ACTIVITIES PACKET for *Children of the River*

Complete the following sections in complete sentences.

1. Setting: Where and when does the story take place? Explain fully with specific details from the novel.

2. Problem: What is the main problem in the story? Is the problem internal (mental) or external (physical)? Support your answer with specific details from the novel.

3. Climax: What is the turning point in the story? Explain your answer with specific details from the novel.

4. Resolution: How is the problem solved? Explain what happened using specific details from the novel.
