

English 9 – Introduction to Genres – Mr. Stephens
Summer Reading
Guiding questions – *Endurance*

All incoming freshmen are required to read two books during the summer, one a novel and the other a non-fiction adventure story, and to complete written work, which will be graded, in preparation for the start of the course. Address these guiding questions as you read, before the beginning of school in August. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers, but your written responses should show that you have read the work closely and thoughtfully, and that you’ll be entering the classroom with a good grip on the ideas it contains. Use the text to prove your points where quotations are appropriate, and plan to give each numbered question-set below between 50 and 150 words (except #6, which will require 250-350 words).

Typed responses are **strongly** recommended. You **may** hand-write your answers, but be prepared to transfer your writing to an electronic document for submission to Turnitin.com in August.

1. The book opens with “The order to abandon ship was given at 5 P.M.” We have to wait for some critical information about this dramatic event. What is the effect of the writer starting the story in the middle, rather than with a ‘normal’ beginning? What missing information do you want to know as you read the first chapter?
2. In chapter 2, the narrator tells us something about Ernest Shackleton’s character, concluding with a statement from one of Shackleton’s men: “he was the greatest leader that ever came on God’s earth, bar none.” As you read through the book, track things Shackleton says and does that support this description. Use quotations (with page numbers) to support your ideas.
3. Do an internet search to bolster your understanding of the story’s setting. Though the book has maps, you will want to use Google Earth or a similar tool to get a better sense of places like the Weddell Sea, the Larsen Ice Shelf, the South Shetland Islands, the Drake Passage, and others as they come up. Write down your impressions of these places.
4. As you read, you will undoubtedly encounter new (or new-ish) vocabulary words, such as ‘brogue,’ on page 8 (of the Basic Books paperback edition), or ‘audacious’ in Chapter 2. Start a collection of new words. Write them down, along with your best guess at the meaning based on the context. Then look up their definitions and write those down. By the book’s end, you should have at least 25 new words.
5. “Because it’s there” is the famous reason one adventurer gave for risking his life to reach an unknown point. Do you think this is a reasonable response? Why do you think humans are so driven to push the boundaries of our knowledge of the world?
6. (250-350 words) After you have finished the book, write a reflection of at least three substantial paragraphs in which you discuss these ideas, giving as much supporting detail as possible:
 - What makes a leader ‘great’? Who has helped you through a dangerous experience?
 - How would you have held up under the conditions Shackleton and his men faced?
 - Which hardship do you think would have been the least bearable for you?
 - What is the hardest adventure you have ever experienced? Describe it in detail.