

8th GRADE SUMMER READING 2026



Read *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom- Young Readers Edition

Read *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom

After Reading

Students are going to write an essay that compares both novels that they read over the summer. This essay will be **2 pages** in length and will identify a central theme in both stories, and then compare the ways that theme shows through.

The Hiding Place is a non-fiction novel while *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is a fiction novel. The ways we see theme show through are going to be different, but they will both have a general theme that you can assign to each book.

1.) Pick a theme that you feel is present in both novels. Write an introduction paragraph that includes both titles and authors, the shared theme in both novels, and a brief (1-2 sentences) description of why.

2.) Your second portion of the essay will be about *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. Talk about how the theme you chose relates to the characters, setting, and plot of the story. Use examples from the text that include proper MLA in-text citations (author last name and page number). (Albom 1)

3.) You will do the same thing that you did for *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* but with *The Hiding Place*. Be sure to include the in-text citations.

4.) Wrap up the essay with a conclusion paragraph. How is the theme different and the same across both novels? What did you learn about that theme from both novels? Did reading the novels change your thoughts on this theme?

Make sure your essay is clean and organized with little to no spelling mistakes.

Comparative Theme Essay Rubric: All Thirteen and The Hiding Place

Criteria	5 — Advanced	4 — Proficient	3 — Developing	2 — Beginning	1 — Limited
Theme Choice & Claim	States a clear, thoughtful shared theme in the introduction and explains why it fits both novels with insight and precision; the claim directly guides the whole essay.	States a clear shared theme in the introduction and gives a brief explanation of why it fits both novels.	Names a theme, but the explanation is general, uneven, or only fits one novel well.	Theme is unclear, too broad, or only loosely connected to the novels.	No clear theme claim is given, or the theme is missing.
Introduction Paragraph	Introduces both titles and authors correctly, presents the shared theme smoothly, and creates a strong opening that prepares the reader for the comparison.	Introduces both titles and authors, states the shared theme, and gives a brief opening overview.	Includes most introduction parts, but one element is missing, awkward, or not fully clear.	Includes only part of the needed introduction information, making the purpose hard to follow.	Introduction is missing or does not identify the novels or theme.
Text Analysis & Evidence	Uses strong, specific examples from both texts to explain how theme develops through characters, setting, and plot in each novel; evidence is well chosen and clearly connected to the theme.	Uses relevant examples from both texts to explain how theme connects to characters, setting, and plot in each novel.	Uses examples from both texts, but some are vague, weak, or not clearly tied to the theme.	Gives few examples, or examples are mostly unrelated to the theme or the novels.	Little or no text evidence is used.
Organization, Conclusion & Conventions	Essay is clearly organized into strong paragraphs with smooth transitions, a thoughtful conclusion that compares both novels and reflects on learning, and almost no spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.	Essay has a clear organization with introduction, body, and conclusion; conclusion compares both novels and writing has only a few minor errors.	Essay has basic structure, but some parts are uneven, the conclusion is simple, or errors sometimes make reading harder.	Essay organization is weak, the conclusion is incomplete or off-topic, and errors often distract the reader.	Essay is difficult to follow, lacks clear paragraph structure, and frequent errors make meaning hard to understand.