

The Learning Choice Academy

August 25, 2016

7th-8th Grade Language Arts - First Week's Assignments

Greetings Students!

Welcome to 7th-8th grade Language Arts! I am excited to be your teacher, and I am looking forward to an exciting and academically rewarding year.

During your first week of school, you will need to complete this packet and be prepared to submit it to me at our first class meeting.

I can't wait to get to know you, and to begin discovering and enjoying great literature together!

Assignments:

1. Review and sign the class syllabus. Bring all required materials to our first class.
2. Complete your "Getting to Know You" essay.
3. Read the short story provided in this packet ("Rikki-Tikki-Tavi") and complete written responses to the prompts in the sidebar labeled as "Read and Discuss" and "Your Turn." Be sure to also read the "Here's How" sections in the sidebar, as they will help with this homework.
4. Complete the attached Spelling Power assignment.

Happy Learning!

-Mr. Chris Trompas

ctrompas@learningchoice.org

## 2016-2017 Study Group Syllabus: Middle School Language Arts (6-8)

**Instructor: Mr. Christopher Trompas**

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**Description and Overview:** This Middle School Language Arts course is designed to begin preparation for high school English courses. Students will read and study a variety of literature, as well as practice multiple genres of writing. Through their literature and writing genre studies, students will enhance their grammar proficiencies and vocabulary repertoire. Students will also learn research, revision, and presentation skills.

### **Literature Reading and Analysis:**

1) Responses to Literature and Informational Texts – Every learning period, you will be assigned several literature pieces and/or informational texts to read and analyze. The stories and texts will be assigned by the teacher and sent home with students. For full credit, please answer thoroughly and in complete sentences.

2) Novel Reading – Each semester, we will read a selected novel in its totality and complete meaningful assignments related to the text.

### **Writing Assignments:**

Regular Writing Assignments – Every learning period, you will be assigned writing projects and essays, which vary in format and genre. Your final drafts need to be typed and should reflect your very best effort. Rubrics will be provided so that you know how your writing assignment will be evaluated. Where possible, model samples will also be provided. We will focus on the following:

1. Narrative writing
2. Literary analysis writing based on novel reading
3. Informative research essay writing
4. Argumentative essay writing

Additionally, students will be completing spelling and grammar practice throughout the year.

### **Approximate Weighting of Assignments & Assessments:**

Reading and Responses to Literature  
30%

Writing Assignments  
30%

Participation/Attendance  
10%

Vocabulary/Spelling/Grammar  
10%

Projects and Presentations  
20%

### **Attendance:**

Weekly and punctual attendance is expected and necessary for student success.

### **Necessary Materials:**

- 1) 1 ½ inch binder
- 2) Notebook
- 3) Pencil
- 4) Highlighter
- 5) Notebook dividers

### **A note on plagiarism:**

- Plagiarism is a serious offense and will result in the consequences as outlined in the TLC Parent/Student Handbook and TLC Discipline Policy.
- ALL student work should be original. If outside sources are used, they must be properly cited in MLA format.

	<p>Student signature:</p> <hr/> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Parent signature:</p> <hr/> <p>Date: _____</p>
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## Week One - Getting to Know Me

Dear Student,

This first assignment will allow you to introduce yourself to me via writing, and will give you an opportunity to share a little about yourself. As your teacher, I am interested in getting to know who you are as a person, not just as a student. Please compose a 1-2 page typed, double-spaced, essay which tells me the following snippets of information about you:

The Basics:

- What is your name? What is the origin/ethnicity of your name? Also, if you know this, did your parents ever consider giving you a different name? If so, what was it?
- Do you have any siblings? If so, how many? What are their names and ages?
- How long have you been a student at TLC?
- How long have you lived in San Diego?
- What do you consider your strongest subject in school? Why?
- Do you have any pets? If so, describe them for me.

Fun Stuff:

- What is your favorite song? Why? (Please provide a reason).
- In your opinion, what is the coolest animal? Why do you feel this way?
- Name the most interesting book you have read during the past year. In what ways was it interesting to you?
- If you could spend a day anywhere, where would that be? Why?
- Describe the most severe weather you have ever experienced.
- What do you see yourself doing in five years?

I want you to have fun with this assignment. Be creative in your responses, as I will read all of them and gain valuable insight into who you are as a person!

I am looking forward to receiving your essay on our first class day.

-Mr. Chris Trompas  
ctrompas@learningchoice.org

# RIKKI-TIKKI-TAVI

Based on the story by Rudyard Kipling



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This is the story of a great war. Rikki-tikki-tavi fought this war in an English family's home in India. He had some help, but he did the real fighting.

Rikki-tikki was a mongoose. His name came from the sound he made going into battle: *Rikk-tikk-tikki-tikki-tchk!* **A**

When Rikki was small, a flood swept him away from his home and family. A little boy named Teddy found him half-dead and brought him home. Teddy and his mother warmed the mongoose till he woke up.

10 Although the mother had a soft spot for animals, she wasn't sure she wanted a wild animal in her house. But Teddy's father convinced her that a mongoose was the perfect house pet. After all, deadly snakes lived right in their garden, and mongooses were snake killers. **B**

Rikki-tikki soon felt better, and he spent the rest of the day and the next morning exploring Teddy's house. **C** In the yard he heard the sad voices of two tailorbirds, Darzee and his wife. The birds were crying because a cobra named Nag had eaten one of their babies. **D** Just then, Nag himself appeared. He was a huge  
20 black cobra, five feet long.

## **A** READ AND DISCUSS

### Comprehension

What has the author told you about Rikki-tikki so far?

## **B** HERE'S HOW

### Reading Focus

I will begin by **summarizing** the **main ideas** in lines 1–14. I meet the main character (Rikki-tikki-tavi) and find out how he came to live with Teddy's family.

## **C** HERE'S HOW

### Language Coach

I know that the word *exploring* is formed by adding the suffix *-ing* to the **root word** *explore*.

## **D** HERE'S HOW

### Literary Focus

I read in lines 16–19 that two birds, Darzee and his wife, are upset. They are upset because a snake named Nag ate one of their babies. I think Nag will continue to cause **conflicts**, or problems, in this story. These conflicts will be important to the **plot**.

**A READ AND DISCUSS**

**Comprehension**

What just happened between Rikki-tikki and Nag and his wife?

**B YOUR TURN**

**Reading Focus**

Summarize the two main ideas in lines 30–42.

**C YOUR TURN**

**Vocabulary**

Why do you think Rikki-tikki answers Chuchundra *scornfully* in line 52?

**D YOUR TURN**

**Literary Focus**

Which is an example of **conflict**: Rikki-tikki’s fight with Karait (lines 38–42) or his conversation with Chuchundra (lines 51–52)? Explain your answer.

“I am Nag,” he said. “Look, and be afraid!”

Though Rikki had never met a cobra, he knew that a mongoose’s job was to kill snakes. Nag knew that, too, and the cobra was afraid.

Rikki-tikki replied, “Well. Do you think you should eat baby birds?”

Nag then played a trick on Rikki-tikki.

“Let’s talk,” he said. “If you eat eggs, why shouldn’t I eat birds?”

30 “Behind you! Look behind you!” cried Darzee.

Rikki-tikki jumped high up in the air. He just missed being struck by Nag’s wife Nagaina, who had slithered up behind him. Rikki landed on Nagaina’s back and bit her, but she struggled free. **A**

When a mongoose’s eyes grow red, it means he is angry. Now Rikki-tikki’s eyes grew very red. But Nag and Nagaina were gone.

40 Teddy ran down the path to pet Rikki-tikki. But as Teddy bent down, something moved in the dust. It was Karait, a small but deadly snake. Rikki’s eyes glowed red.

Teddy shouted to his parents. His father ran out with a stick. But Rikki-tikki had already killed Karait. **B**

Teddy’s father beat the dead Karait.

“Why is he doing that?” thought Rikki-tikki. “I have already killed the snake.”

The family treated Rikki like a hero. He enjoyed the attention. But he did not forget about Nag and Nagaina.

50 That night, Rikki wandered around inside the house. He met Chuchundra the muskrat, a little ratlike animal. Chuchundra was very scared.

“Don’t kill me!” cried Chuchundra.

“Why would I kill you?” said Rikki-tikki scornfully. **C D**

“I don’t know,” said Chuchundra. “Maybe Nag will think I am you some dark night, and he will kill me. My cousin Chua, the rat, told me—”

“Told you what?” said Rikki-tikki.



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## E READ AND DISCUSS

### Comprehension

What are Nag and Nagaina up to?

Chuchundra was terrified, but he told Rikki that Nag and Nagaina were planning an attack that very night.

Just then, Rikki-tikki heard a soft *scratch-scratch* coming from the bathroom. Rikki-tikki moved quietly into the bathroom. There he heard Nag and Nagaina whispering in the drainpipe.

“Go in quietly, and kill the big man first,” said Nagaina.

“Are you sure we should kill the people?” said Nag.

“Of course. The mongoose will leave if we kill them. Then we can be king and queen of the garden, and we will have a safe hatching ground for our eggs,” said Nagaina. She and Nag had eggs that were almost ready to hatch. **E**

Nag slipped through the drain into the bathroom. His head came first, then his five feet of scaly body. Rikki-tikki was angry, but also afraid. He stayed very still for an hour. Then, he moved slowly toward Nag. He knew he had to kill Nag with his first bite. Rikki jumped on Nag’s head. Nag shook him every which way. Though Rikki was dizzy and hurt all over, he held on tightly.

Then Rikki felt a blast. The fight had awakened Teddy’s father, who shot Nag.

The man picked up Rikki. He shouted, “It’s the mongoose again! This time, he has saved our lives!”

Exhausted, Rikki-tikki dragged himself to Teddy’s bedroom.

When morning came, Rikki-tikki knew he had a job to finish. Nagaina was still alive. Rikki went to Darzee for help.

**A READ AND DISCUSS**

**Comprehension**

What is Rikki-tikki up to?

**B HERE'S HOW**

**Vocabulary**

The word *coiled* tells how the snake was lying on the floor. I think it means that the snake was lying in a circle. I checked the dictionary, and it says “gathered in loops or circles.” My meaning was correct.

**C READ AND DISCUSS**

**Comprehension**

What is Nagaina up to?

Darzee told Rikki that Nagaina was by the trash heap, crying over Nag's body. Her eggs were in the melon garden. But the foolish Darzee refused to help Rikki get rid of the cobra's eggs. Darzee didn't think it was fair to destroy eggs. **A**

Darzee's wife had more common sense. She didn't want young cobras around. She helped Rikki by fluttering around, pretending her wing was broken. Nagaina couldn't resist such an easy target, so she pursued the bird.

90 Meanwhile, Rikki-tikki found Nagaina's twenty-five soft, white eggs. He had crushed all but one when he heard Darzee's wife screaming:

“Rikki-tikki, I led Nagaina toward the house. Now she is going in! Hurry! She is going to kill!”

Holding the last egg in his mouth, Rikki-tikki hurried to the porch.

There, Teddy and his parents sat at the breakfast table. They were as still as stones, hardly daring to breathe. Nagaina was coiled up on the floor by Teddy's chair. **B C**

100 Rikki-tikki came up and cried, “Turn round and fight, Nagaina!”

“I will fight you soon,” she said, but she didn't turn away from Teddy's bare leg.

Rikki-tikki's eyes were blood red. “Look what I have here,” he said. “Your last egg! I have smashed all the others.”

Naina spun around. Teddy's father grabbed Teddy and pulled him across the table to safety.

“Tricked! *Rikk-tck-tck!*” laughed Rikki-tikki. “*Rikki-tikki-tck-tck!* Now, come and fight with me.”

110 Nagaina looked at her egg. “Give me the egg, Rikki-tikki. I will go away and never come back,” she said, lowering her hood.

“Yes, you will go away—to the trash heap. Fight!” said Rikki-tikki.

They circled each other in a deadly dance. But Rikki had forgotten the egg. Nagaina quickly caught her last egg in her mouth and raced away with it. Rikki-tikki followed her and

caught her tail in his sharp little teeth. Together they disappeared down a rat hole.

Darzee, who was watching the battle, cried, “A mongoose has no chance against a snake down there. Brave Rikki is dead!”

120 But suddenly, the grass moved again. There was Rikki-tikki. He dragged himself out of the hole.

“It is all over,” Rikki said. “Nagaina is dead.”

Then he curled up right there and slept until late afternoon. He didn’t even hear the Coppersmith, a little bird whose job it was to shout out the good news.

That night at the house, Rikki ate a feast. He was amused by all the fuss.

“Just think, he saved our lives and Teddy’s life,” said Teddy’s mother.

130 “What are they worried about?” Rikki-tikki wondered.

“The cobras are all dead. And if any more come, I’m here.”

Rikki-tikki was proud in his own way, and he had a right to be. From then on, he protected the yard. No cobra ever again dared to enter it. **D**

## Comprehension Wrap-Up

1. How do the views of the family members change in this story?



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### **D** YOUR TURN

#### Literary Focus

The **conflict** in a story usually gets solved before the story ends. Re-read lines 130–134. Underline the portion that tells you the conflict is over.

## Spelling Power

### Lesson 1: Short Vowel Spellings

#### Word Bank

hamper	optimism	dispense	literal	criminal
impulsive	accomplice	mustache	valid	enhance

#### Key Concepts

1. Short vowel sounds are often spelled with single vowel letters.  
comic      bankruupt
2. Short vowel sounds include *\a\* as in *hat*, *\e\* as in *net*, *\i\* as in *did*, *\o\* as in *lot*, and *\u\* as in *cup*.

#### Spelling Practice

Choose the word from the Word Bank defined by each phrase. Write your choices on the lines. Then circle the short vowel(s) that you hear in each word.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. hair on the upper lip
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. helper in crime
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. to hinder *or* a container for dirty clothes
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. related to crime *or* person committing crimes
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. habit of seeing the best in things
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. acting without forethought
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. to distribute
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. to increase or improve
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. logically sound, accurate, or effective
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. according to dictionary definitions

