

9th English
2018-2019 Summer Reading

“The Day the Children Vanished” by Hugh Pentecost—short story

“Chowchilla Bus Kidnapper...”—news article

“California Mass Kidnapping...”—news article

selected news images

This summer, you will be reading about a situation in which real life imitated fiction. First, read the short story about a mysterious kidnapping, written in 1958. Then, read the two newspaper articles that recount the real-life kidnapping that was eerily similar to the one described in the short story. The twist? The real-life kidnapping took place almost twenty years later!

While reading these selections, complete the following assignments. These will be **due to your English teacher on the second day of class in whichever semester you are enrolled in English I. You will not know your schedule until the end of July, so be prepared to submit your assignment on August 9.** If you are able to type and save your assignments, you will be able to submit them electronically. If not, please write your assignments NEATLY IN PEN.

We have found in the past that students who do not turn in their summer reading assignments have a difficult time passing their English class for the first nine weeks. Please do not set yourself up for possible failure! Complete the assignments to the best of your ability. Remember that tutoring is available during the month of June if you need assistance.

PART 1: Pre-reading vocabulary

Look up each of these words. Do not write the definition you find; instead, use the definition to write a sentence with the word that shows your understanding.

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| 1. quarry | 4. trauma | 7. impeccable | 10. claustrophobia |
| 2. vaudeville | 5. turbulence | 8. well-to-do | 11. rationalize |
| 3. bereaved | 6. ventilation | 9. surplus | 12. perpetrator |

PART 2: Reading comprehension

On the last page of your short story, you will find the following discussion questions. Below, the questions are broken down and numbered individually. Answer each question thoroughly and in complete sentences. You do not have to re-write the questions.

1. Why do nine Clayton children go to the school in Lakeview?
2. Describe the dugway and its surroundings.
3. Why is a disappearance in the dugway “impossible”?
4. When do people begin to suspect Jerry Mahoney of kidnapping the children in the school bus?
5. Why do they react this way?
6. Does this seem a likely reaction in these circumstances? Why?
7. Describe some of the experiences of Pat Mahoney and his wife Nora Faye during their careers in show business.
8. What were Nora’s last words to her husband and son?
9. After the disappearance of the bus, Pat Mahoney speaks repeatedly of the Great Thurston. How do Elizabeth Deering and Clyde Haviland interpret his comments?
10. What is Pat’s real reason for talking about the magician?
11. Explain in your own words the criminals’ plan for robbing the bank.
12. Explain in your own words Pat Mahoney’s plan for stopping the robbery.

13. Pat Mahoney says that a magician's purpose is "to make the audience think only what you want them to think and see only what you want them to see." How does this statement relate to the kidnapping of Jerry Mahoney and the busload of children?

14. In the United States, kidnapping is considered one of the worst of all crimes, and in nearly every country of the world it is punishable by a long prison sentence or by death. In your opinion, does this crime deserve such punishment? Why or why not?

PART 3: Extended paragraphs

For each of the following questions, answer in a 8-10 sentence paragraph. Be sure to have a clear topic sentence. Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You do not have to re-write the questions.

1. After reading all three selections, write a paragraph in which you **compare and contrast** the fictional kidnapping in Clayton with the real-life kidnapping in Chowchilla.

2. Look up the word **sympathy**. Do you feel sympathy for the victims of the Chowchilla kidnapping after reading the "California mass kidnapping" article? Why or why not? Incorporate at least one quote from this article into your paragraph to support your answer.

3. Again, using the definition of the word **sympathy** as your guide, do you feel sympathy for James Schoenfeld after reading the "Chowchilla bus kidnapper" article? Why or why not? Incorporate at least one quote from this article into your paragraph to support your answer.

4. Oscar Wilde famously said, "**Life imitates art far more than art imitates life.**" Think about this quote in relation to the events described in the short story, written in 1958; and then the events described in the articles, that takes place almost twenty years later in 1976. You can also take into consideration that the Chowchilla kidnapping was later made into a TV movie, and it was also featured on Criminal Minds. How does this quote relate to these selections? Do you agree or disagree with the quote by Oscar Wilde?

5. How do the **images** influence your understanding of the real-life kidnapping in Chowchilla? In what ways do they help you further understand the victims' comments that they have found it difficult to move on, even after forty years? Refer to particular images in your answer.