

James S. Rickards High School Summer Reading

Attention: Parents and Students!

Rising 9th Graders



WHO: ALL James S. Rickards High School Students

WHAT: The following information outlines the assignments we have given to our students for the 2025 James S. Rickards School-Wide Summer Reading Program. While specific courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) may have additional summer assignments that will need to be completed before the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year, we want to develop a program that encourages a culture of reading and an expectation of academic dedication for all students. Therefore, we ask you to read the attached information and participate in our summer reading activity. The assignment composed for this year focuses on having students fine-tune their reading skills by answering text-based questions on grade-level, themed texts. Students are expected to complete each assignment by themselves, only using the power of their brains. If a student is caught plagiarizing, they will receive a 0%.

- Students are to use the active reading skills/strategies they have learned throughout the year to navigate the text.
- Students are to answer then each text-based question based on their reading.

Students can use PDF Candy (found in ClassLink) to annotate, highlight the text or correct answers, and insert text boxes to complete responses.

If that option is not viable, students can create a new Word document that includes the answers for each text. Be sure to include the title of the text and then proceed with typing your answers to ensure proper labeling and therefore, grading.

WHEN: While the expectation is that students will select the best choice for each question, write original answers to the short responses, and submit them as a course requirement by the end of the first week of school following our return, we also want to encourage parents and groups of students to use the text and suggested novel readings as a point of discussion with each other so that we can all share in the experience of these texts. Activities centered upon the reading skills within these texts will take place within the first few weeks of Language Arts instruction in the fall.

This assignment is DUE FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 2025 to their ELA teacher.

CONTACT INFO: If you have any questions regarding our JSRHS Summer Reading Program, please feel free to contact Mrs. G. Cooper, JSRHS ELA Department Chair (cooperg2@leonschools.net)

Spaceships

As you read, monitor your comprehension by:

- Using context clues to make predictions about the boldfaced vocabulary words.
- Pay attention to descriptive language and imagery to visualize what the poet is describing. Visualizing will help you increase your engagement and improve your comprehension.

Spaceships Poem

We waited behind bushes,
sniper like discipline,
for our uncles to arrive.
The four of us,
recounting the last time
we'd spotted them,
the brilliance in what we saw,
how we squinted and pointed,
dug in penniless pockets
for cameras we didn't own.

None had large heads
or oval shaped eyes.
They weren't eight feet tall
with iron claws,
hanging dreads.
But they were out of this world.
When they landed their Chevys
we'd rub our eyes
making sure it was bona fide,
that these flying saucers
had discos inside.

Spaceships Reading Quiz

Instructions for Student:

Read each question carefully and select the best answer.

1. "Spaceships" is told in the tense, from a point of view.

Answer choices for the above question

- A. past; third-person
- B. past; first-person
- C. present; first-person
- D. present; third-person

2. The following passage (lines 11-15) adds to the development of the poem **mainly** by _____.

"None had large heads
or oval shaped eyes.
They weren't eight feet tall
with iron claws,
hanging dreads."

Answer choices for the above question

- A. contrasting how different the "uncles" are from normal aliens
- B. providing the poem with imagery and descriptive language
- C. suggesting that the people arriving in spaceships are not scary
- D. suggesting that the people arriving in these spaceships are short

3. Which of the following inferences is **most strongly** supported by the passage below (lines 17-21)?

"When they landed their Chevys
we'd rub our eyes
making sure it was bona fide,
that these flying saucers
had discos inside."

Answer choices for the above question

- A. The children think that their uncles must not be the real owners of these cars.
- B. The children have recently been to a disco.
- C. The uncles must drive at a very high speed.
- D. The children can hardly believe that their uncles are real.

4. Which of the following lines **best** supports the correct answer to Question 3?

Answer choices for the above question

- A. "When they landed their Chevys"
- B. "we'd rub our eyes"
- C. "making sure it was bona fide,
- D. "that these flying saucers / had discos inside."

5. Match each definition with its correct vocabulary word.

Word Options

Bona fide	Sniper	Recount	Saucer	Discos
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Definition	Word
To describe to someone an event or experience	
Dance halls	
A person who shoots from a hidden and faraway place	
Authentic	
A disk-shaped spacecraft	

Written Response

Students must answer each question in five complete sentences citing textual evidence from the poem with the exception of questions 4 and 5.

Question 1

In “Spaceships,” the speaker and three others, upon witnessing their uncles’ arrival, “dug in penniless pockets / for cameras we didn’t own.” Why do they want to take pictures of their uncles?

Question 2

Whom or what are the uncles being compared to throughout the poem? Cite lines or words from the poem as support.

Question 3

Why does the speaker end the poem by “[making sure] that these flying saucers / had discos inside”? How does this image relate to what the speaker is describing, as well as the poem’s meaning? Explain, citing any other passage from the poem that supports your answer.

Question 4

What context clues helped you determine the meaning of the word **recounting** as it is used in the first stanza of “Spaceships”? Write your own definition of *recounting* and cite the clues in the text that led you to that definition.

Question 5

Read the following dictionary entry:

brilliance

bril•liance /'bril yəns/ *noun*

1. extreme or intense light
2. bright, vivid color
3. extreme talent or intelligence

Which definition most closely matches the word **brilliance** as it is used in the text? Write the correct definition of *brilliance* here and explain how you figured it out.

The War of the Worlds

As you read, monitor your comprehension by:

- Using context clues to make predictions about the boldfaced vocabulary words.
- Establishing a purpose, or reason, for reading before you read to help you determine how to approach a text and what details and information to focus on. To establish a purpose for reading, you might ask yourself questions such as the following:
 - What is my purpose for reading this text?
 - How should I read this text? Should I read at a leisurely pace? Should I skim and scan to look for specific information? Should I be prepared to highlight certain information?
 - What should I look for or pay attention to while I am reading?

Read

Excerpt from Chapter 5, “The Heat Ray”

After the glimpse I had had of the Martians emerging from the cylinder in which they had come to the earth from their planet, a kind of fascination paralysed my actions. I remained standing knee-deep in the heather, staring at the mound that hid them. I was a battleground of fear and curiosity.

I did not dare to go back towards the pit, but I felt a passionate longing to peer into it. I began walking, therefore, in a big curve, seeking some point of vantage and continually looking at the sand heaps that hid these newcomers to our earth. Once a lash of thin black whips, like the arms of an octopus, flashed across the sunset and was immediately withdrawn, and afterwards a thin rod rose up, joint by joint, bearing at its **apex** a circular disk that spun with a wobbling motion. What could be going on there?

Most of the spectators had gathered in one or two groups—one a little crowd towards Woking, the other a knot of people in the direction of Chobham. Evidently, they shared my mental conflict. There were few near me. On the man I approached—he was, I perceived, a neighbour of mine, though I did not know his name—

and accosted. But it was scarcely a time for articulate conversation.

"What ugly brutes!" he said. "Good God! What ugly brutes!" He repeated this over and over again.

"Did you see a man in the pit?" I said; but he made no answer to that. We became silent, and stood watching for a time side by side, deriving, I fancy, a certain comfort in one another's company. Then I shifted my position to a little **knoll** that gave me the advantage of a yard or more of elevation and when I looked for him presently, he was walking towards Woking.

The sunset faded to twilight before anything further happened. The crowd far away on the left, towards Woking, seemed to grow, and I heard now a faint murmur from it. The little knot of people towards Chobham dispersed. There was scarcely an intimation of movement from the pit.

...

Then I saw some cabmen and others had walked boldly into the sand pits, and heard the clatter of hoofs and the gride of wheels. I saw a lad trundling off the barrow of apples. And then, within thirty yards of the pit, advancing from the direction of Horsell, I noted a little black knot of men, the foremost of whom was waving a white flag.

This was the Deputation. There had been a hasty consultation, and since the Martians were evidently, in spite of their repulsive forms, intelligent creatures, it had been resolved to show them, by approaching them with signals, that we too were intelligent.

Flutter, flutter, went the flag, first to the right, then to the left. It was too far for me to recognise anyone there, but afterwards I learned that Ogilvy, Stent, and Henderson were with others in this attempt at communication. This little group had in its advance dragged inward, so to speak, the circumference of the now almost complete circle of people, and a number of dim black figures followed it at discreet distances.

Suddenly there was a flash of light, and a quantity of **luminous** greenish smoke came out of the pit in three distinct puffs, which drove up, one after the other, straight into the still air.

This smoke (or flame, perhaps, would be the better word for it) was so bright that the deep blue sky overhead and the hazy stretches of brown common towards C hertsey, set with black pine trees, seemed to darken abruptly as these puffs arose, and to remain the darker after their dispersal. At the same time a faint hissing sound became audible.

Beyond the pit stood the little wedge of people with the white flag at its apex, arrested by these phenomena, a little knot of small vertical black shapes upon the black ground. As the green smoke arose, their faces flashed out **pallid** green, and faded again as it vanished. Then slowly the hissing passed into a humming, into a long, loud, droning noise. Slowly a humped shape rose out of the pit, and the ghost of a beam of light seemed to flicker out from it.

Forthwith flashes of actual flame, a bright glare leaping from one to another, springing from the scattered group of men. It was as if some invisible jet impinged upon them and flashed into white flame. It was as if each man were suddenly and momentarily turned to fire.

Then, by the light of their own destruction, I saw them staggering and falling, and their supporters turning to run.

I stood staring, not as yet realising that this was death leaping from man to man in that little distant crowd. All I felt was that it was something very strange. An almost noiseless and blinding flash of light, and a man fell headlong and lay still; and as the unseen shaft of heat passed over them, pine trees burst into fire, and every dry furze bush became with one dull thud a mass of flames. And far away towards Knaphill I saw the flashes of trees and hedges and wooden buildings suddenly set alight.

It was sweeping round swiftly and steadily, this flaming death, this invisible, inevitable sword of heat. I perceived it coming towards me by the flashing bushes it touched, and was too astounded and stupefied to stir. I heard the crackle of fire in the sand pits and the sudden squeal of a horse that was as suddenly stilled. Then it was as if an invisible yet intensely heated finger were drawn through the heather between me and the Martians, and all along a curving line beyond the sand pits the dark ground smoked and crackled. Something fell with a crash far away to the left where the road from Woking station opens out on the common. Forthwith the hissing and humming ceased, and the black, domelike object sank slowly out of sight into the pit.

All this had happened with such swiftness that I had stood motionless, dumbfounded and dazzled by the flashes of light. Had that death swept through a full circle, it must **inevitably** have slain me in my surprise. But it passed and spared me, and left the night about me suddenly dark and unfamiliar.

Reading Quiz

Instructions for Student

Read the questions carefully and select the best answer.

Question 1

What is **most likely** the meaning of the white flag that appears in Paragraph 7?

Then I saw some cabmen and others had walked boldly into the sand pits, and heard the clatter of hoofs and the gride of wheels. I saw a lad trundling off the barrow of apples. And then, within thirty yards of the pit, advancing from the direction of Horsell, I noted a little black knot of men, the foremost of whom was waving a white flag.

Answer choices for the above question

- A. The humans are violently attacking the Martians.
- B. The group of men are planting the flag in the ground near the Martian landing to establish that this is their territory.
- C. The men who are seeking out the Martians are showing that they come in peace.
- D. It is a gift being given to the Martians.

Question 2

Which of these inferences about Ogilvy, Stent and Henderson is best supported by the text (Paragraph 9)?

Flutter, flutter, went the flag, first to the right, then to the left. It was too far for me to recognise anyone there, but afterwards I learned that Ogilvy, Stent, and Henderson were with others in this attempt at communication. This little group had in its advance dragged inward, so to speak, the circumference of the now almost complete circle of people, and a number of dim black figures followed it at discreet distances.

Answer choices for the above question

- A. They are close friends with the narrator.
- B. They attempted to communicate with the Martians.
- C. They have plans to attack the Martians.
- D. They were standing with the narrator and his neighbor as they stared at the Martian pit.

Question 3

Which of the following **best describes** the mood in Paragraph 14?

Then, by the light of their own destruction, I saw them staggering and falling, and their supporters turning to run.

Answer choices for the above question

- A. Curiosity
- B. Amazement
- C. Fear
- D. Calm

Question 4

What do the following lines from Paragraph 17 reveal?

All this had happened with such swiftness that I had stood motionless, dumbfounded and dazzled by the flashes of light. Had that death swept through a full circle, it must inevitably have slain me in my surprise. But it passed and spared me, and left the night about me suddenly dark and unfamiliar.

Answer choices for the above question

- A. The narrator has surprisingly survives the attack.

- B. Everyone on earth has perished in the fire.
- C. The narrator is ready to strike back at the Martians.
- D. The Martians have left behind a new earth that the narrator is eager to embrace.

Question 5

What is a **most likely** central idea of the passage?

Answer choices for the above question

- A. Humans have a sense that there is something bad coming and they should not trust the Martians.
- B. The fear caused by the invasion has caused all people to unite in one universal response.
- C. People are curious about the mysterious visitors.
- D. Before approaching the pit, the humans hold a summit to decide what was the best move.

Question 6

1. Which sentence from the text **most strongly** supports the correct answer to Question 5?

Answer choices for the above question

- A. "The crowd far away on the left, towards Woking, seemed to grow, and I heard now a faint murmur from it."
- B. "Then, by the light of their own destruction, I saw them staggering and falling, and their supporters turning to run."
- C. "There was scarcely an intimation of movement from the pit."
- D. "But it was scarcely a time for articulate conversation."

Question 7

Which of the following inferences is best supported by the text?

Answer choices for the above question

- A. Humans cannot take their eyes off the Martians because they are so beautiful.
- B. The narrator is in awe of the Martians' arrival and unsure if he should be afraid.
- C. The Martians have given no indication that they have any mental capacity.
- D. The narrator would like to leave Earth with the Martians once they depart.

Question 8

Which statement from the text **most strongly** supports the correct answer to Question 7?

Answer choices for the above question

- A. "I began walking, therefore, in a big curve, seeking some point of vantage and continually looking at the sand heaps that hid these newcomers to our earth."
- B. "'Did you see a man in the pit?' I said; but he made no answer to that."
- C. "I did not dare to go back towards the pit, but I felt a passionate longing to peer into it."
- D. "'What ugly brutes!' he said. 'Good God! What ugly brutes!'"

Question 9

Match each vocabulary word with its corresponding synonym:

apex	pallid	inevitably	knoll	luminous
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Synonym	Word
Peak	
hill	
pale	
bright	
certainly	

Question 10

Order these events chronologically as they occur in the story:

A light flashes and people begin catching on fire.	The Martian vessel sinks into the pit.
A specter rises from the pit accompanied by a cloud and a drone sound.	The narrator stares at the pit as the crowds approach it.

First	Second	Third	Fourth

Written Response

Students must answer each question in five complete sentences citing textual evidence from the story with the exception of question 5.

Question 1

In the first paragraph, the narrator stares at the mound where the Martians are hidden from view. What effect does the author create by hiding the Martians in this way? Cite details from the text to support your answer.

Question 2

How do the other spectators respond to the new arrivals? Support your response with evidence from the text.

Question 3

At what time of day is this scene set? Cite at least two passages from the text to support your answer.

Question 4

In paragraph 5, the narrator says that he moved to a **knoll** to gain “a yard or more of elevation.” Based on this context, what does *knoll* mean? Write your definition and explain how you found it.

Question 5

Keeping in mind that the Latin prefix *lumin-* means “light” and the root *-ous* means “full of,” write your definition of **luminous** here.

Essay Writing Prompt

Writing Situation

Many adolescents have difficulty making the move to high school. In response to this problem, the board of education has decided to require that all first-year high school students attend an orientation workshop just before school begins. You have been selected to serve on the committee which will plan the orientation activities.

Directions for Writing

Write a report to be presented to the workshop planning committee in which you make recommendations for the activities and information that should be part of the program to prepare students for high school. Support your recommendations.

Students must show their planning process. Attach your planning sheet, rough draft, and final draft to the packet when you submit it to your teachers,