

8th Grade English - Summer Reading Essay Assignment

One of the greatest of all moral teachers was Aristotle. He was a Greek philosopher during the 300's B.C. who had a major impact on history, science, and theology for hundreds of years. Aristotle, one of the most intelligent people who ever lived, thought a great deal about virtues. He came up with a list of what we now call the "four cardinal virtues": **fortitude, temperance, justice, and prudence**. The word *cardinal* comes from the Latin word meaning "the hinge of a door." All of these pivotal virtues "open the door" to moral strength. The Christian thinkers have added to this list: **faith, hope, and love** which are referred to as the "theological virtues." We will also add two more: **compassion and humility**.

Defining the Virtues:

1. *Fortitude*: Moral courage, the strength to persevere and do the right thing in the face of adversity or challenge.
2. *Temperance*: Self-discipline, ability to control appetites and passions, to say no to excesses, to live in moderation.
3. *Justice*: Virtue that enables us to treat one another fairly--rendering to others what we owe them and treating others without unfair presence.
4. *Prudence*: Taking care with the decisions one makes.
5. *Faith*: Realizing our need for something beyond us, the understanding that we cannot function on our own strength--trusting God with our well-being when we cannot foresee circumstances.
6. *Hope*: Looking beyond the circumstances to see the hand of God working through every situation for our good, not for our harm.
7. *Love*: The greatest of all virtues, the ability to act toward others with sacrificial disregard for ourselves.
8. *Humility*: Seeing ourselves as we truly are; being realistic about our true condition.
9. *Compassion*: To feel with others, learning to put ourselves in the place of others.

Your assignment is to write a 5 paragraph essay. Choose one of the nine virtues above and explain three ways that this virtue is seen in the novel, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Follow the basic 5-paragraph essay model which includes an introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. Use SPECIFIC examples from the book including appropriate quotes and citations. The paper may be typed using Times New Roman font, size 12 and double-spaced or handwritten in cursive, also double-spaced.