

# English 8 Summer Reading

## Text: Yann Martel's 2001 novel, *Life of Pi*

### TASK 1: Read Carefully

Purchase a used or new copy of Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*. Read it carefully. Take notes if you are a notetaking reader. Annotate if you are an annotating reader. Do what you need to do to remember the book in a deep and lasting way. Just don't come in on August 13 and announce, yeah, I read that in June so I don't remember much. We will have activities that require you to remember the novel well, and it will be clear if you do not...ESPECIALLY in regards to PART 3: "Benito Juárez Infirmary, Tomatlán, Mexico." PART 3 is the shortest section of the novel, but in some ways, the most important. So make sure you know it very well, even if this summer writing work does not include PART 3. I'd read that section twice and ask myself this: why is it here?

### TASK 2: Assemble Supplies

1. **3 sheets of 8.5 x 11 blank printer paper** (or 3 sheets of 8.5 x 11 paper that is distinctive in some way that pleases you...like off white, or marbled...as long as it does not make the writing you will do on it hard to read...also, if you use heavier paper printer stock, you may need more than a Forever stamp for postage—you may need to get it weighed).
2. **A business sized envelope for mailing**, and those measure 4 1/8" x 9 1/2" (you may use another size envelope, but that means you will want to weigh the envelope at the post office to make sure it does not require more than a Forever stamp to mail.)
3. **1 First-Class Stamp/Forever Stamp for mailing**. A first-class letter costs 73 cents to mail, which is still the cheapest game in town, but a Forever Stamp is always okay because it does not expire, even if rates go up.
4. **1 sheet of lined paper to put underneath the blank paper**, in case you would like lines to follow for your writing on the blank printer paper.
5. **1 blue/black ink pen** for writing the address clearly at the center of the front of your envelope, and your return address in the top, left corner (ye olde stamp up in the right-hand corner).
6. **Art supplies**, including some sharpened #2 lead pencils for writing, and for making art, perhaps some lovely crayons, markers, and colored pencils, and maybe a fine-tipped black sharpie for outlines of images.
7. **Your well-loved copy of Life of Pi**, in case you need to consult any passages or want to quote any small bits as you work on your Pi Life Adventures application.
8. **A cat** (optional, of course) but I do find that a fine cat nearby...preferably orange...does inspire writers and artists alike. Pi Patel agrees with this claim.

**TASK 3:** Create your application to travel with the...

## **Pi Life Adventures Tour Co.**

You will be submitting an application to travel with Pi on an adventure tour. You must show your knowledge of his adventures, as documented by *Author* in Martel's novel.

First Adventure for YOU: ALL writing for this application must be done by hand. By *your* hand. No helpers. If that means you have to recopy sheets or go more slowly, then that is what that means. There are no phones or computers on Pi's lifeboats, me mateys!

### **PARTS OF THE APPLICATION: Three 1-sided blank sheets + 1 envelope**

- PACKING LIST:** 1 sheet, 8.5 x 11, single sided, with bullet points of what Pi learns as a child before his boat journey to Canada in PART 1: "Toronto & Pondicherry," of the novel along with the source of the learning in PART 1 (the first 90ish pages). The heading of this sheet should be "Pi's Packing List." How many bullet points? 15 evenly spaced over the page. That may sound like a lot...but you won't even cover everything. Make sure there is white space between and in the margins so it is easy to read (NOT a paragraph, in other words). Offer a range of things Pi's learned, big and small, from a wide sweep of activities and interests in his life. Even with 15-20 bullets, you won't be able to list everything. Pi needs to see that you have the ability to read, think, and sort for importance. Thus, you will have to make choices that represent the whole of PART 1, taking care not to omit the most important learning moments out, but also include some learning that a less-careful reader than yourself might miss. Share your insights, in other words. At the bottom right, you will put this: "I hereby give this my seal of approval." Below that, you must write your cursive official signature. If you do not know how to do this, practice. Ask your parent how they came up with their signatures. Generally, it needs to be your cursive name + your own stylish flare. (Print just won't cut it.)

**REQUIRED ART FOR PACKING LIST:** a decorative border that thematically goes with Pi's life in PART 1. Are there colors that would best capture the mood of that section? Show Pi that you get how he feels about his childhood through your use of color. In addition, in white spaces include several "stickers" of images that symbolize moments of Pi's childhood. Don't worry, there are many visual descriptions of places, items, and animals in PART 1. Show your knowledge through art.

- ITINERARY:** 1 sheet, 8.5 x 11, single sided, with a bullet point list of what you think *Pi*— after resting and eating some cookies in Mexico—would consider his important experiences in PART 2: "The Pacific Ocean." Make very clear which information from the "Packing List" was used for this experience. How many bullet points? So glad you asked! 10. Just 10. So, again, you will need to make some choices that show your ability to sort and prioritize. These 10 defining moments should be listed in the order in which they appear in the novel, and they should span the entire section of PART 2 (so from about page 95-290). For example: Pi Pee Training Richard Parker because Pi Understands "Territory." (And then if Pi looks back to your "Packing List," he will see your explanation of the "Territory" lesson.) At the

bottom right, you will put this: "I hereby give this my seal of approval." Below that, you must write your cursive official signature.

**REQUIRED ART FOR ITINERARY:** a decorative border that thematically goes with Pi's life in PART 2. Are there colors that would best capture the mood of that section? Show Pi that you get how he feels about his Pacific journey through your use of color. In addition, in white spaces include several "stickers" of images that symbolize moments of Pi's 227 days in the lifeboat. Don't worry, just like in PART 1, there are many visual descriptions of places, items, and animals in PART 1. Show your knowledge through art. (Keep your trusty red crayon handy as you might need to draw some blood splatters.)

**YOUR PITCH:** On this last sheet of paper, you will write Pi a letter. This should only be on one-side of the paper, also handwritten, as Tell Pi why YOU would be a great addition to his adventure crew. Offer 3 clear benefits of your participation, and these can be skills, knowledge or a combo of both. These should be skills/knowledge that would actually be useful physically, emotionally, spiritually relevant to a 277-day lifeboat journey. Make each one distinct from the others—so not 3 camping skills. 1 camping skill + 2 other categories. Think creatively. Think how *things you know how to do or just know about* could translate into lifeboat usefulness...can you explain why? Articulate your logic? Can these be a little whimsical? Yes! Once you get to know Pi in the novel, you will know that he welcomes the unexpected. No art is required for the letter, but it must be neat as a pin, leave margins, have a little space between lines, and end with a closing thought + your marvellous signature. How long should this be? Long enough to explain your 3 strengths, and long enough to demonstrate to Pi that you are really invested in getting on his crew.

**ENVELOPE:** On the front, your address in the left-hand corner, Pi's address in the middle-center of the space, your stamp in the far right-hand corner. Address:

Pi Life Adventure Company  
% Dr. Eicher & Bishop Seabury Academy  
4120 Clinton Parkway  
Lawrence, Kansas 66047

**REQUIRED ART FOR ENVELOPE:** On the BACK, offer 4 key images that you have not used inside but that capture the experiences of PART 1 and PART 2. Also, write an original motto that you think would capture the spirit of the Pi Life Adventure Company, based on your reading of the novel. Don't know what a motto is? Look it up, me mateys!

## PRECAUTIONS:

Since you are mailing a unique written and artistic item, please take careful pictures of all parts before you mail your work to me. However, I will NOT take pictures as a substitute unless you can prove you mailed it and the mail delivery system is the reason I did not receive it. I'm old, and I've only had like 2 items in my entire life lost in the US mail—and that's including back in the 70's, 80's and 90's when we humans wrote a lot of actual letters—so the US mail and the people who work there are, in my experience, worthy of great respect. Both lost letters I reference were addressed incorrectly...so I feel very confident that letters mailed domestically will get to me on time if **postmarked no later than July 31, 2025**.

Keep in mind that just dropping a letter in a mailbox will not necessarily get it postmarked that day, so if you are getting close to July 31st, to be extra sure, you should go to a post office and tell them you need to see it postmarked. Don't know what postmarking is? You'll learn.

## GRADING CONSIDERATIONS:

- Neat handwriting (remember, neat and beautiful are not the same thing)
  - Pencil is okay, but it must be a sharpened pencil, pressed hard and clear
  - Can be pen if it is blue or black ink and not a thick point that is hard to read
  - Yes, you can write lightly in pencil and then go over with pen, erasing the pencil shadows after (but this is not required)
- A distinct, consistently-written, cursive signature of your name that appears on all documents in the bottom right-hand corner.
- Clear, grammatically-correct writing.
- Clever, specific mentions of textual information that only a careful reader of the novel would know to include. (Remember, any English assignment—on some level—is about proving you read carefully, so show off what you know!)
- Art: thematically appropriate borders on all sheets + "sticker" style art of images linked to that sheet and its section of the novel.
  - Neatly done with sharp lines
  - Load of Color (colored pencils, markers, crayons)
  - Not traced from the internet