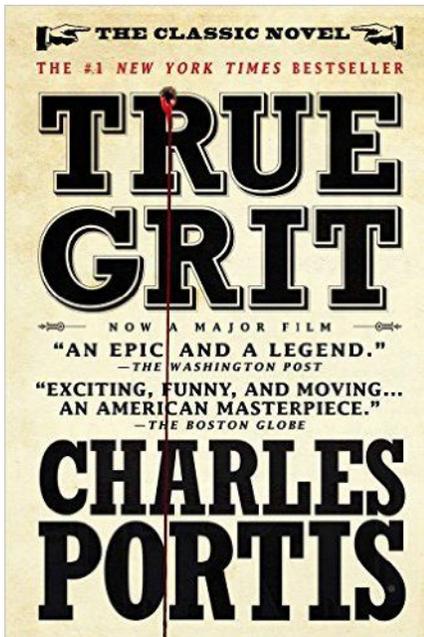


# Summer Reading

## Grade 10



### *True Grit*

by Charles Portis

ISBN-13: 978-1590204597

*True Grit* tells the story of Mattie Ross, who is just fourteen years of age when a coward going by the name of Tom Chaney shoots her father down in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and robs him of his life, his horse, and \$150 in cash money. Mattie leaves home to avenge her father's blood. With the one-eyed Rooster Cogburn, the meanest available U.S. Marshal, by her side, Mattie pursues her father's murderer into Indian Territory.

Your job is to read the novel carefully, enjoying the story but also paying attention to how Portis develops both the characters and the themes. You should **annotate** your text as you read, thinking about the following questions as you do so:

1. The story is told from the point of view of Mattie Ross as an adult in the early part of the 20th century, but the action takes place when she is a teenager in the 1870's. What image of herself does she present to the reader? In what ways does the perspective of the grown Mattie influence the way that she tells the story?
2. Note Mattie's tendency to divide people into categories according to race, religion, and politics. What does this habit reveal about her as a character? What does it reveal about the time and culture in which she lives?
3. To what degree do Mattie, Cogburn, and LaBeouf behave heroically? In what ways is their behavior not heroic? How would you define "grit," and what, if anything, does it have to do with being a hero?
4. The novel takes place in a time when women had far fewer rights than they have today, but it was written in 1968, a year that was marked by feminist protest. How does the character of Mattie both reflect the cultural attitudes toward women during the time in which the story takes place and anticipate the feminist attitudes of the time in which it was written?
5. Mattie has an absolute sense of right and wrong that is deeply influenced by her religious upbringing. Is Mattie's "eye for an eye" approach to her revenge on Chaney justified? Are her methods sound?