

## 2009 Summer Reading Assignment Dual-Credit English IV

# All Creatures Great and Small

By James Herriot

*All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.*

Welcome to your summer reading assignment for Dual-Credit English IV. One of the requirements for the course is the summer reading assignment *All Creatures Great and Small* and writing an essay. The essay is due the first full day of class. You also are to take a short comprehension test during the first week of classes. Herriot presents humorous conflicts and characters that bravely face the struggles of life. English IV includes the study of British Literature. This novel gives you a slice of British life in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. You can purchase the novel at the Sabre, your local bookstores, or online at Amazon.com.

### The Book at a Glance

**Genre:** Memoirs.

**Setting:** Countryside of Yorkshire, England, during the late 1930s.

**Structure:** Vignettes covering a two-year period, in chronological order.

**Conflicts:** The narrator, James Herriot, must win acceptance from animal owners who think they know more than he does, a trained veterinarian. Herriot also has humorous conflicts with the inept Tristan and endures some embarrassing moments as he attempts to win the lovely Helen.

**Tone:** Love of the beautiful countryside; respect and affection for its fiercely independent inhabitants; appreciation of the comedy and pathos of everyday life.

**Themes:** People are capable of coping with hardships bravely, often in unconventional ways. People should face life's difficulties with both humor and courage. Love finds a way.

### Post-Reading Activity

Choose **one** topic and write 150-200 words. Your writing's content, thought development and grammar are the basis for your grade.

**1. Writing a One-Act Play:** Choose a chapter or combination of chapters filled with humorous characters and conflict. Adapt the chapter or chapters into a one-act play. You might consider single incidents or an ongoing conflict. You should include stage directions that describe the characters' feelings and actions. You will need to create some dialogue. Choose an appropriate title. Before you start writing the play, decide which scene will mark its climax.

**2. Supporting a Critic's Comments**

Phoebe Adams, writing for *The Atlantic Monthly*, said that this book is [1] full of recalcitrant cows, sinister pigs, neurotic dogs, [2] Yorkshire weather, and [3] pleasantly demented colleagues. It continues to be one of the [4] funniest and most likable books around. Write an essay in which you cite passages from the book to illustrate each of the four numbered parts of Adams's comments.

**3. Create a topic including these interesting characters.**