

Summer Reading 2021

Dear Student and Families,

Happy summer! You've made it through another year of middle school! As you plan your summer break, please include time to complete your summer reading assignment. Next year, we will be studying world history from ancient river civilizations through the Middle Ages. Our theme will be the Hero's Journey.

Reading Assignment: The following books all use the hero's journey plot device. Pick **one** to read that is new to you.

- ***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak**

One of the most enduring stories of our time, *The Book Thief* is just a small story really, about, among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist fighter, and quite a lot of thievery.

- ***The Princess Bride* by William Goldman**

S. Morgenstern's timeless tale—discovered and wonderfully abridged by William Goldman—pits country against country, good against evil, love against hate. From the Cliffs of Insanity through the Fire Swamp and down into the Zoo of Death, this incredible journey and brilliant tale is peppered with strange beasts monstrous and gentle, and memorable surprises both terrible and sublime.

- ***The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien**

Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who enjoys a comfortable, unambitious life, rarely traveling any farther than his pantry or cellar. But his contentment is disturbed when the wizard Gandalf and a company of dwarves arrive on his doorstep one day to whisk him away on an adventure.

- ***The Curious Incident of a Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon**

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.

- ***On The Come Up* by Angie Thomas**

Sixteen-year-old Bri wants to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. Or at least win her first battle. As the daughter of an underground hip hop legend who died right before he hit big, Bri's got massive shoes to fill. But it's hard to get your come up when you're labeled a hoodlum at school and your fridge at home is empty after your mom loses her job. So Bri pours her anger and frustration into her first song, which goes viral...for all the wrong reasons. Insightful,

unflinching, and full of heart, *On the Come Up* is an ode to hip hop from one of the most influential literary voices of a generation. It is the story of fighting for your dreams, even as the odds are stacked against you; and about how, especially for young black people, freedom of speech isn't always free.

- ***All-American Boys by Jason Reynolds***

In this Coretta Scott King Honor Award–winning novel, two teens—one black, one white—grapple with the repercussions of a single violent act that leaves their school, their community, and, ultimately, the country bitterly divided by racial tension. A bag of chips. That's all sixteen-year-old Rashad is looking for at the corner bodega. What he finds instead is a fist-happy cop, Paul Galluzzo, who mistakes Rashad for a shoplifter, mistakes Rashad's pleadings that he's stolen nothing for belligerence, mistakes Rashad's resistance to leave the bodega as resisting arrest, mistakes Rashad's every flinch at every punch the cop throws as further resistance and refusal to STAY STILL as ordered. But how can you stay still when someone is pounding your face into the concrete pavement? There were witnesses: Quinn Collins—a varsity basketball player and Rashad's classmate who has been raised by Paul since his own father died in Afghanistan—and a video camera...Simmering tensions threaten to explode as Rashad and Quinn are forced to face decisions and consequences they had never considered before.

- ***A Hope More Powerful than the Sea (Young Reader's Edition) by Melissa Flemings***

A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea tells the story of Doaa Al-Zamel, a Syrian girl whose life was upended in 2011 by her country's brutal civil war. She and her family escape to Egypt, but life soon quickly becomes dangerous for Syrians in that country. Doaa and her fiancé decide to flee to Europe to seek safety and an education, but four days after setting sail on a smuggler's dilapidated fishing vessel along with five hundred other refugees, their boat is struck and begins to sink... Doaa's eye-opening story, as told by Melissa Fleming, represents the millions of unheard voices of refugees who risk everything in a desperate search for a safe future.

- ***A Storm Too Soon (Young Adult Version) by Michael J. Tougias***

A spellbinding tale of maritime disaster, survival, and an absolutely daring rescue from Michael J. Tougias, the author of *The Finest Hours*, which is now a major motion picture. When a forty-seven-foot sailboat disappears in the Gulf Stream during a disastrous storm, it leaves behind three weary sailors struggling to stay alive on a life raft in the throes of violent waves eighty feet tall. This middle-grade adaptation of an adult nonfiction book tells the story of the four intrepid Coast Guardsmen who braved the sea and this ruthless storm, hoping to rescue the stranded sailors. *A Storm Too Soon* tells a riveting true story that will delight young readers.

Writing Assignment:

1. Keep a reading log. Select at least ten chapters (evenly spaced throughout the text) to write a **one sentence** summary of that chapter. Practice writing concisely!

2. When you have finished your book, write 2-3 paragraphs (well-developed paragraphs tend to be about 8-12 sentences long), complete with topic sentences, evidence, and conclusions, that address the following:

Prompt: What are the traits of a hero? How does a character from the book you chose fit the definition of a hero? If you are stuck, here are some things to consider as you read that may help inform your response:

- What trait(s) makes the character from your chosen book heroic? Why? How does your protagonist exemplify that?
- What are the conflicts and challenges s/he faced, and how did s/he overcome those challenges?

*This assignment should be complete and ready to be turned in on Monday, August 16 (the first day of school). Please do your best and get the school year off to a great start! Let us know if you have any questions.

Happy reading!

-Ms. Harmon, Mrs. Kessler, & Mr. Nagle