

SUMMER READING FOR INCOMING EIGHTH GRADERS

2007 REQUIRED READING LIST

An objective (multiple choice) test will be given on the first book when the students return to school in September. Students will be allowed to use their handwritten assignment during the test. A written assignment must also be completed for the second book. Teachers will collect both written assignments for review. The grade for summer reading will be part of the first term grade (5%).

YOU MUST READ AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SIX BOOKS:

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows by J.K. Rowling will be released on July 21, 2007. In the February 1 announcement from the book's publisher, Lisa Holton, President of Scholastic Children's Books, said, "We are thrilled to announce the publication date of the seventh installment in this remarkable series. We join J.K. Rowling's millions of readers--young and old, veterans and newcomers--in anticipating what lies ahead." Save the date, and let the countdown begin! (Amazon.com description)

Let the Circle Be Unbroken by Mildred D. Taylor (contemporary/real life fiction) This sequel to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* begins with T.J.'s trial for murder, the result of events detailed in the earlier book. Quickly, however, the focus of the story changes as new characters and situations bring dangerous and even life-threatening conflicts and problems into the lives of the Logans and others in their community.

Rules of the Road by Joan Bauer tells the story of newly-licensed teenage driver Jenna Boller. Jenna is hired by Madeline Gladstone, the elderly president of Gladstone Shoe Stores, to drive her in her Cadillac from Chicago to Dallas. This cross-country adventure is filled with funny and flamboyant characters, clever dialogue and a number of unforgettable scenes, some hilarious and some quite sad.

Left for Dead by Pete Nelson is a remarkable true story. The sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* during WW II was one of the worst disasters in U. S. naval history. Of the almost 900 men who survived the fiery sinking, only 317 would be rescued five days later, having endured hunger, thirst, exposure, hallucinations and the murderous attacks of hundreds of sharks. The captain was blamed and court-martialed by the U.S. Navy. But was he at fault? The survivors didn't think so --- not one of them --- and they tried for fifty years to clear the captain's name. They got nowhere until 1996, when 11-year-old Hunter Scott, through a school history fair project, started his crusade to right a wrong and rewrite history. This book is his story, and the story of the sailors whose incredible courage and sacrifice are an inspiration to all.

I Have Lived a Thousand Years by Livia Bitton-Jackson (non-fiction) This frank and moving memoir of a Holocaust survivor, who was just thirteen when she was sent to a concentration camp, is a story of cruelty and suffering, but at the same time a story of hope, faith, perseverance, and love.

Gathering Blue by Lois Lowry (fantasy/science fiction) Set in the future, this book tells of a world devastated by a series of conflicts and wars. In this harsh and difficult environment, the weak are cast aside. Kira, an orphan with a twisted leg, fears for her future, but she is spared by the all-powerful Council of Guardians because she is a gifted weaver. While her talent keeps her alive and brings certain privileges, Kira soon realizes that she is surrounded by mysteries and secrets. She is determined to uncover the truth.

Suggestions for Additional Summer Reading

Note: Any of the following books would be appropriate for additional summer reading. However, remember that your first book must be either *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*, *Rules of the Road*, *Left for Dead*, *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* or *Gathering Blue*. You will be tested on one of those five books.

(Contemporary/Real Life Fiction)

Hope Was Here, also by Joan Bauer, tells of another young girl who is strong and resourceful. Like Jenna Boller, she is helped along the road to adulthood by several loving and encouraging adults.

S.E. Hinton's *Rumble Fish* is a book which comes close in theme and mood to *That Was Then, This Is Now*.

If you read and enjoy *Let the Circle Be Unbroken* from the Required Reading List, you might want to read *The Road to Memphis*, which continues the story of Cassie and the Logan family into 1941, the year the United States entered World War II.

(Non-Fiction)

My Bridges of Hope continues Livia Bitton-Jackson's story. (See *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* from the Required Reading List.) There are also many other interesting Holocaust memoirs. Several excellent titles that are appropriate for eighth graders are *Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps* by Andrea Warren, *The Cage* by Ruth Minsky Sender, and *Parallel Journeys* by Eleanor H. Ayer, Helen Waterford, and Alfons Heck. The last book tells the story of two German children who grew up just a few miles from each other; one became a member of Hitler Youth and the other a victim of the Holocaust.

Of Beetles & Angels by Mawi Asgedom is an unforgettable true story of a young boy's remarkable journey from civil war in east Africa to a refugee camp in Sudan, then to a childhood on welfare in an affluent American suburb, and eventually to a full-tuition scholarship at Harvard University. By turns, Mawi's story of his life is humorous, heartwarming, tragic, triumphant and inspiring.

Revenge of the Whale Nathaniel Philbrick is the true story of the whaleship Essex, which was attacked and destroyed by an enraged whale. The book begins with the story of the Essex's journey from Nantucket to the Pacific and its fateful encounter with the huge whale. Most of the book, however, details the dramatic struggle for survival of the 20 men who were stranded in three small whaleboats thousands of miles from the coast of South America after they abandoned the sinking ship Essex. The book includes many photographs, drawings and maps to help the reader understand and follow the story of those 20 individuals.

(Fantasy/Science Fiction)

Sabriel by Garth Nix tells of an 18-year-old girl, Sabriel, who travels from our rational world, which is governed by the laws of science, into the Old Kingdom, where magic rules. There she must undergo a desperate quest through the Gates of Death to free her father from the strengthening powers of the spirits of the dead. *Lirael*, the second book in the series, introduces a new, powerful character who will unexpectedly find herself allied with Sabriel in a fight for the triumph of good over evil. *Abhorsen*, the third book, continues the story as Lirael, Sabriel, and others try to stop the Destroyer, the enemy of all Life.

Philip Pullman's trilogy, *The Golden Compass*, *The Subtle Knife*, and *The Amber Spyglass*, mirrors the story of the Temptation, Fall and Redemption of humankind. The first book introduces the reader to a world parallel to our own but with a mysterious twist. In this book, with the aid of friends, witches, armored polar bears, and her daemon Pantalaimon, 12-year-old Lyra fights the evil that is stealing children and conducting horrible experiments on them. The next two books continue Lyra's adventures and also introduce other characters and increasingly intriguing situations. The allegorical elements become more obvious in these sequels. High adventure combined with complicated issues, philosophical questions, and complex relationships make this series a vivid and memorable experience for the ambitious reader.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams is for those who prefer science fiction with a decidedly offbeat sense of humor. Two minutes before the Earth is demolished by a cosmic construction crew to make way for an intergalactic freeway, the clueless Arthur Dent is whisked away to a spaceship by his alien friend Ford Prefect. Soon the two are off on a hilarious interstellar adventure in which satire, inventive dialogue and totally original characters combine for a work filled with inspired lunacy. In order, *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*, *Life the Universe and Everything*, *So Long and Thanks for All the Fish*, and *Mostly Harmless* are four books which continue the off-the-wall adventures of the two friends.