

Summer Reading for Rising Eighth Graders



Students,

I am thrilled to be your ELA teacher for the 2018-2019 school year! This summer, you are required to read and reflect on four chapter books. This assignment is due the first day of school, so please make sure you sit down with the calendar I have included in this packet and plan out your summer so you can begin your last year at GLOBE successfully. Take it from someone who failed to read *Julius Caesar* for her ninth grade Honors class, missed the first day of high school to complete the assignment and got grounded for a month -- it doesn't pay to procrastinate. You will be the ones deciding which books you read, but I have provided categories that will ensure you read a variety of texts. I know that reading four books will seem easy to some and intimidating to others, so that is why I am giving you control over the lengths and complexity of your books. I am excited to see all the different books you all choose! Although you are only required to read and reflect on four chapter books, I hope that you will challenge yourselves to read a book from all six categories. I am going to be completing this assignment along with you all, so I will share my six books and reflections in August as well.

You must read from four of the following categories:

- A chapter book about someone different than you
- A nonfiction chapter book (memoir included)
- A chapter book by a #diversebooks or #ownvoices author**
- A chapter bestselling book
- A chapter book recommended by a friend
- A newly published chapter book whose review you like

Book review sites: Goodreads, Publishers Weekly, Kirkus Review

Need a book suggestion? Please see the list that I have compiled. Because it is long, it will be posted on the GLOBE website and Mrs. Libowsky's Google Classroom rather than being printed out. You may also look online at the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl lists, brightly.com, commonsensemedia.org, diversebooks.org or bookriot.com to peruse their lists of YA and middle school recommendations.

Have a great summer,

Mrs. Calvo

acalvo@theglobeacademy.net

*** In June of 2013, multicultural publisher Lee and Low Books put together a graphic illustrating that although 37% of the population of the United States are people of color, only 10% of children's books published contained multicultural content. This gap has remained steady from 1994-2013—18 years! #diversebooks is a call to change those stats because they are books that are authored by diverse authors or books with diverse characters. #ownvoices is a hashtag that started as a call to bring attention to authors from a privileged perspective writing about marginalized people without personal experience. While such stories are often written from a place of good intent, the stories can end up being damaging to the marginalized communities. #ownvoices authors share a marginalized identity with the protagonists of their books.*

Parents and guardians,

Happy summer break! For those of you who already know me, I am excited to partner with you all again in the coming school year! For those of you who have yet to meet me, I look forward to getting to know you and your children. I know that many of you have great things planned for the break, so I wanted to make sure to assign something with flexibility. I want your children to enjoy reading yet have a set goal to make sure they push themselves. For parents of avid readers, encouraging them to read four books will be a piece of cake. If your child "hates" reading, I understand it may sound like a daunting task but I hope that giving the students control over what they read will eliminate a lot of the pushback. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me via email or better yet, encourage your child to email me. There will be no exceptions in the workload, but I am happy to try to give more reading suggestions or guidance.

Please be advised that I have not read all of the books on the reading list that I have created and obviously have not been able to read all YA books that might be recommended on various websites. My list is compiled from my experience, research and colleague recommendations. As thirteen-year-olds, eighth graders are officially entering the world of Young Adult books. I have attempted to select titles that will be on the younger side of the YA age range, but be advised that YA typically encompasses content relatable to adolescents ages 13+. While I love literature's ability to make us think in new ways and spark conversations, I respect that families have varying opinions on what topics may be considered appropriate for children of certain maturity levels or backgrounds. Commonsensemedia.org is a great resource to use as you are determining whether or not you want your child reading a particular text and it will also help you know which topics you may want to discuss with your child as they inch closer and closer to high school.

Within this packet is a blank calendar so you and your child can plan out what books will be read and when. I recommend having your child choose their four books and complete the calendar **before the end of May** so they have ample time to gather their texts. Their lists may change by the end of the summer, but it will be helpful for them to have a plan in place. You are welcome to use the public library to borrow books and if you want to purchase copies for your children, remember to support our local bookstores like Little Shop of Stories!

Have a great summer,

Mrs. Calvo

acalvo@theglobeacademy.net

Book Reflection

Directions: You will complete one short book reflection for each of the four books you have chosen to read. Take notes while you read the books to make this easier! Each reflection should be two - three paragraphs. This is not the time to be long-winded! Please make sure you write thoughtful responses and check your grammar. You may handwrite your responses or type them in a Google Doc to share with me. On the first day of school, I will expect four reflections to be turned in, though you are welcome to share them via Google Docs as you complete them this summer if you prefer. These reflections will be presented as Book Talks in the first few weeks of school. The purpose of Book Talks is to share about a book to create enthusiasm about a text (or let others know what NOT to read, as is sometimes the case.) There will be consequences for late or incomplete work. Plagiarised work will receive a zero and disciplinary action.

Each reflection must include the following:

- Title
- Author
- Tell me which of the six categories the book met
- Tell me a little bit about the plot **without big spoilers**
- Tell me your thoughts on the book
 - How did it make you feel?
 - Did the book leave an impact of any kind?
 - Would you recommend that others read this book? Why or why not?
 - What kind of reader would like this book?
- Choose a specific part of the book or a quote that stuck with you for some reason. Cite the excerpt and tell me why you selected it. You do not have to complete a Works Cited page because you should only be using your book as a source, but you do need to list the chapter or page number(s). Again, please keep big spoilers out of this. I know that might be hard because sometimes the moments that stick with us are the crazy plot surprises or climactic moments, but since we will be sharing these, I don't want you to end up ruining a significant part of the book for another reader.

Here's an example of what I am looking for:

I chose to read *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba as my Bestselling Book selection. The book is about a boy growing up in Malawi, a small country in Africa. He and his family are poor and have to suffer through famines, so his life is full of obstacles. William loves science, but is not able to go into school because of the poverty in his village. He has an inquisitive mind and breaks apart radios to see how they work. Because of his ingenuity, he later uses books and found materials to build a windmill near his home. Though everyone thinks he is crazy, he succeeds in completing the windmill at is able to provide his family and village with electricity. He starts being recognized by various news outlets and is able to use his rising fame for the betterment of his people.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind taught me a lot about resilience. There are times that William is not sure whether he will live until the next day, but he and his family keep trying to focus on survival rather than giving up. I know about famine from the news, but reading about a first person account of someone living through it made me realize how fortunate I am. Bad things can happen in the blink of an eye, so cherishing the time we have is important. There was a moment in chapter fifteen where William attends the TED conference in Africa and he sees many other innovators being recognized for their work. All of the people being recognized are native Africans and he sees in that moment that he is not alone. That part of the book made me tear up because I know a lot about the history of African nations and it is beautiful to know that Africans are being empowered to help their own people rather than being "saved" by outsiders. Erik, a man at the TED conference, even said, "Where the world sees trash, Africa recycles. Where the world sees junk, Africa sees rebirth" (Kamkwamba 265). I think most readers would enjoy this book because it has a lot of scientific references, yet it still reaches the more emotional reader as well.

