Summer Reading for Rising 8th Graders

Dear Rising 8th Graders,

I can’t wait to meet all of you next year in 8th grade English language arts. You may remember me from when I worked with some you in 5th grade a few years ago at The GLOBE Academy. I will be coming from the lower campus to be with you next year. I have many years of experience teaching middle school, so expect to get started on the first day of school.

Over the summer you are required to read at least four books. It’s the summer so find books you will enjoy. Here are the categories for you to choose from:

- A chapter book about someone different than you
- A nonfiction chapter book (memoir included)
- A chapter book by a #diversebooks or #ownvoices author
- A bestselling chapter 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

Check Ms. Libowsky’s book list, Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl lists, brightly.com, commonsensemedia.org, diversebooks.org, and bookriot.com.

During the first week of school, please be prepared to share four responses – one for each book. You are required to produce four responses to your reading. At least two must be written 2-3 paragraph responses. The others may be a video/podcast response or a creative visual arts response.
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Dear Parents and Guardians,

I will be your child’s 8th Grade English Language Arts teacher next school year. I am an experienced middle school language arts teacher in both public and private schools. By now, most of you are experts in how The GLOBE Academy works. There will be time in the fall to get acquainted and discuss the curriculum and other issues. This letter is to explain summer reading.

Students are required to read four books over the summer and complete four responses to the reading. At least two must be written responses of 2-3 paragraphs. The other two may be a video response or a visual arts response. All four can be written if they choose. See the example attached.

Please help them find books they will love reading. While there are different categories, you should be able to find books for even the most finicky readers. If there are any issues regarding book choice, please contact me over the summer at jmarks@theglobeacademy.org. If your child does not yet have a library card, the summer is a great time to make that a regular habit and destination.

Please help your child to plan their reading schedule over the summer. Long car and plane trips are a perfect time for extended reading. If desired, audiobooks are a wonderful option. Overdrive is the public library app for ebooks and audiobooks.

As this is only the second year of 8th grade at the GLOBE, all donations of middle school books are welcome. I am trying to build our classroom library, so if you are planning to clear out books that your family has finished with, please consider giving them to our class.
Reading Response

Directions: At least two of the four responses must be written. For each book you read, write one reading response. Take notes while you read the books to make this easier! Each response 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 2-4 written responses to be turned in. (You may put them into a GoogleDoc too.) Students will be sharing their responses with each other.

Outline for Written Response

- Title
- Author
- Category
- Brief summary
- Personal Response
  - 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 explain why you selected it.
Here’s an example:
Title: *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*
Author: William Kamkwamba
Category: Bestselling Book
Summary:
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.

Personal Response:
*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.