

SUMMER 2018 READING ASSIGNMENT – *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn

You will need to buy a copy of *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn for your summer project.

The novel *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn is designed to present and develop the Socratic method of analysis and synthesis in order to reach the most LOGICAL conclusion. The narrator of this extraordinary tale is a man in search for truth. He answers an ad in a local newspaper from a teacher looking for serious pupils, only to find himself alone in an abandoned office with a full-grown gorilla who is nibbling delicately on a slender branch. “You are the teacher?” he asks incredulously. “I am the teacher,” the gorilla replies. Ishmael is a creature of immense wisdom, and he has a story to tell, one that no other human being has ever heard. It is a story that extends backward and forward over the lifespan of the earth from the birth of time to a future there is still time to save. Ishmael’s proverb, “With gorilla gone, will there be hope for man? With man gone, will there be hope for gorilla?” is posted behind Ishmael and is the focus of the extended debate that ensues between Ishmael and the student. Like all great teachers, Ishmael refuses to make the lesson easy; he demands the final illumination to come from within ourselves. Is it man’s destiny to rule the world? Or is it a higher destiny possible for him—one more wonderful than he has ever imagined?

During the semester, you will learn to analyze samples of text (including *Ishmael* and texts in both nonfiction and fiction genres) and develop skills that are needed to understand and develop logical arguments, engage in debates, develop persuasive arguments, etc.

*******Your summer assignment is to read and annotate the novel. You may want to write 2 or 3 annotations per page. This is just a suggestion; you do need to remember where important details are for our class discussion that will take place after the test. To help you remember what you have read, you may also want to write a short summary at the beginning or end of each chapter.**

On the second or third day of school, you will take a test on the novel as well as write an essay on a topic determined by the teacher. You will be allowed to use your book when you take this test and write the essay.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at mambrose@ppsb.org.

Have a great summer!