



## Summer Reading for 2015-2016

### A guide for students entering 6-8th grades

Reading proficiency and comprehension is a major element of what we are trying to accomplish in both the Literature and Humanities classes. We want to encourage our students to be lifelong readers and learners. The literature assigned during the school year has to compete with a rigorous academic and extracurricular schedule. Therefore, summer is the perfect time to enjoy a fine example of literature or history in a friendly, familiar, and family-filled environment.

To advance this goal, we have chosen books which reflect our desire to have students value and appreciate their summer reading experience. We encourage parents or guardians to be actively involved in this reading process.

### 8th Grade

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At the beginning of the school year, teachers will engage the students in discussions about the book(s) they read over the summer. The discussions will accentuate prominent themes, underlying truth, moral significance, and beauty in literature as students bring their varied experiences to the table.

Use the guidelines below to respond to your three summer reading books. The student will be required to read the following books for which they will be enrolled into the respective regular English Literature or honors Humanities course.

Regular English Lit Required Texts: *The Crossing* (Gary Pulsen)

Honors Humanities Required Texts: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Edward Gibbon, H.H. Milman) ISBN-10:1117354326 paperback or B001D4QOKW Kindle version; *Augustine of Hippo: A Life* (Henry Chadwick)

The first writing assignment of the year will be a response paper over the summer reading. Listed on each grade's summer reading list are the questions to use as your template for writing your response paper which will be due on the fifth day the class meets. These questions serve as a guide both for the journey through the text as well as discussion in class. It also allows the student to write their response as they read or immediately after they read the text during the summer.

#### **Please write a response paper for each of the three books you read.**

Your responses will be due at the beginning of your fifth meeting in class.

\*\*\*Note: Do not use Cliff Notes, Sparknotes, movies, abridged versions, or any other substitute/aid materials.

**Response paper format:** You have been asked to read three books over the summer, the requirements above, then one book of your choosing from the list below. There are four questions for you to answer (for each book)

and you should anticipate writing one paragraph for each question. Please follow the paragraph format that you have learned at SMA. Open each paragraph with a topic sentence, support the topic sentence with examples and analysis, and conclude the paragraph with a summary concluding sentence.

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### **1: What is the book about?**

Write a brief summary of the book. Remember to begin your paragraph with a topic sentence (main idea of paragraph). The next few sentences should include the main events of the story and the last sentence of your paragraph should be a concluding statement.

### **2: What were your connections between the text and your prior experience or knowledge?**

Was there anything in the book that you read that you were familiar with already? (life experiences, history class, other books, television documentaries, discussions with parents, etc.) If not, what *ideas* were new to you? (not characters or fictional places but personalities, experiences, the time period, etc.)

### **3: To which character did you most strongly respond? Why?**

Did you like or dislike a particular character in the book? Explain your answer. Describe his/her personality. What was it about them that you admired or did not admire? If you did not feel anything about the character, explain why you think he/she did not make an impression on you.

### **4. As you read the book, how did it change a view you previously held?**

Describe how it revealed something new to you whether it is about life in general or yourself. Did you change your mind about anything after you read the book? Explain. Did you learn anything new from reading the book? Explain. Did you just enjoy reading about a familiar subject? How was it already familiar to you?

Please choose ONE of the following books to read in addition to the above required books. It does not matter which edition/ISBN# you read (except no abridged versions).

### **Books of Choice (hard copy or e-books):**

1. *The Miracle Worker* (Williams Gibson)
2. *The Musician's Daughter* (Susanne Dunlap)
3. *Enemy Brothers* (Constance Savery)
4. *Lord of the Flies* (William Golding)
5. *The Hiding Place* (Corrie Ten Boom)
6. *War of the Worlds* (H. G. Wells)
7. *White Fang* (Jack London)
8. *Red Badge of Courage* (Stephen Crane)