

The Masters School
Middle School Summer Reading Program
for Students Entering Sixth Grade Humanities

Summary of Summer Assignment:

A total of four books must be read and responded to in writing by summer's end: two books are required reading and two are books of your choice. A Reading Journal is also required and **MUST** be brought to Humanities class on the first day of school.

Summer is approaching and, no doubt, you are looking forward to fun, sun, and relaxation. Nothing goes better with these three things than a good book. This year, we are approaching Summer Reading differently in hopes of making the experience more meaningful for you and to give you a head start in school.

Beginning in September, you will be required to read a minimum of 25 self-selected books from a variety of genres before the end of May 2009. Summer reading gives you the chance to get a jump on this requirement, as all books read during the summer count towards this august goal. The two required summer readings, listed below, were chosen to help prepare you for our study of the Hudson River.

So, you are to read these two required books, plus a third book from the Recommended Book List that follows, and the fourth book is entirely your choice (with parental approval), and it certainly can come from the list as well. We need a record of what you read, and your thoughts in writing, so you are also required to keep a Reading Journal (details to follow).

Reading Tips

1. Try to establish a regular reading time, before bed, after lunch, whatever works for your schedule. A set time to read will get you in the habit and become part of your daily routine.
2. Have a book with you at all times—in your beach bag, strapped to your bike rack or stuffed in your backpack.
3. If you begin a book and give it a fair chance, but find it a real drag, do not feel you have to finish it. On the other hand, you may be glad if you persist with a difficult book.
4. Not all your reading need be novels. There are good magazines, journals, manuals, plays, short stories and all kinds of literature. It is all “reading.”

Reading Journal

A reading journal is a great place to react to what you are reading. You can find out exactly how you feel about the characters; you may gain insight about the theme and plot; and you can expand your overall enjoyment of the literature. You are required this summer to keep a Reading Journal that will be used throughout the school year. Here's how to begin.

Journal Requirements

- Use a composition (marble) notebook; on the cover title it “Reading Journal” and make sure your name is also on the cover.

- For each book you read, select one prompt from the list of prompts that follows and answer all parts of the prompt in your journal. Select a different prompt for each book; you will wind up responding to a total of four prompts. Be sure you answer all questions in a prompt, as most have multiple questions.
- All journal responses must be in complete sentences.
- Each prompt answer should be at least one page long.
- Each entry must have a heading that includes the date, title of the book, and the author's name.
- Questions must be clearly indicated in the journal, either by writing them down word-for-word or by including the gist of each question in the answer.
- Proofread for spelling and grammar.
- Pen or pencil is acceptable; print or cursive (script) is acceptable; NEATNESS COUNTS
- Drawings and sketches are encouraged.
- Bring your Reading Journal to class on the first day of school. It will be needed for class discussions and will receive a grade.

List of Prompts for Reading Journal Entries

Select a prompt from the list below for each of the four books you read this summer and answer them in your Reading Journal.

Note: each prompt can only be used once and a total of four prompts need to be responded to in your Reading Journal to receive full credit.

1. Write down your thoughts – after reading the opening chapter(s) of the book. How do your impressions change (or do they) after reading half the book? Do you feel any differently after finishing the book? Would you read the book again?
2. What emotions did the book invoke: laughter, tears, smiles, anger? Or, was the book just boring and meaningless? Record some of your reactions.
3. Sometimes books touch you, reminding you of your own life, as part of the larger human experience. Are there connections between the book and your own life? Or, does the book remind you of an event (or events) that happened to someone you know? Does the book remind you of what happened in another book you've read?
4. Would you like to be one of the characters (acquire a personality trait)? Which of the characters would you become, if you could? Why? If there's something about the character that you'd change, what is it?
5. If you were the author, would you have changed the name of a character, or altered the location of a scene? What does the name mean to you? Do you have a negative connotation associated with the name (or the place)? What would you name the character instead? What would you use as a setting?

6. Does the book leave you with questions you would like to ask? What are they? Would you like to direct your questions at a particular character? What questions would you like to ask the author of the book? Are there questions that you may be able to answer by reading more about the author's life and/or works?
7. Are you confused about what happened (or didn't happen) in the story? What events or characters do you not understand? Does the use of language in the story confuse you? How did your confusion affect how you liked the book? Is there anything that the author could have done to make what happened (or didn't happen) more clear?
8. Is there an idea in the book that makes you stop and think, or prompts questions? Identify the idea and explain your responses.
9. What are your favorite lines/quotes? Copy them into your reading journal and explain why these passages caught your attention.
10. How have you changed after reading this text? What did you learn that you never knew before?
11. Who else should read this book? Should anyone not be encouraged to read this book? Why? Would you recommend the book to a friend or fellow classmate?
12. Would you like to read more works by this author? Have you already read other works by the author? Why or why not?
13. Write a brief summary or review of the book. What happened? What didn't happen? Capture what it is about the book that stands out (or doesn't stand out).
14. Write about the characters. Which one is your favorite? Is there a character you hate/detest/despise? Why? What traits could you change about the characters that would change how you think about them? Do you think that any of the characters represent real people? Does anything about a particular character seem to be related to the author's true personality – who the writer is?

Required Reading

1) Fiction: *The Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth George Speare
ISBN-10:0440479002 (paperback)

2) Nonfiction: *The Hudson River* by Melissa Whitcraft
ISBN-10: 053116425X (paperback)

Note: Both books are available for purchase online from MBS Direct at <http://www.mbsdirect.net/Search.php>

Recommended books

Aiken, Joan
Alexander, Lloyd
Armstrong, William
Avi
Ayres, Katherine

The Wolves of Willoughby Chase
Rope Trick or *The Arkadians*
* *Souder*
Crispin: The Cross of Lead; The Good Dog
Stealing South

Babbitt, Natalie
Banks, Lynn Reid
Barron, T.A.
Bellairs, John
Blumberg, Rhoda
Bodett, Tom
Brink, Carol Ryrie
Brittain, Bill
Burnett, Frances Hodgson
Byars, Betsy
Christensen, James
Colfar, Eoin
Cooper, Susan
Coville, Bruce
Creech, Sharon
Cushman, Karen
Danziger, Paula
Dahl, Roald
Doherty, Berlie
Eager, Edward
Edwards, Julie
Erdrich, Louise
Enzenburger, Hans M.
Fox, Paula
Funke, Cornelia
Furlong, Monica
Giff, Patricia Reilly
George, Elizabeth Craighead
Grahame, Kenneth
Hankes, Kevin
Hobbs, Will
Hoeye, Michael
Holm, Jennifer L.
Hunter, Molly
Ibbotson, Eva
Jacques, Brian
Klise, Kate
L'Engle, Madeline
Lowry, Lois
Lewis, C.S.
McKinley, Robin
Magorian, Michelle
Martin, Ann
Morey, Walt
Murphy, Jim
Naidoo, Beverly
O'Brien, Robert C.
O'Dell, Scott
Paine, Penelope
Paolini, Christopher
Paterson, Katherine
Paulsen, Gary

Tuck Everlasting
**The Indian in the Cupboard*
The Seven Songs of Merlin
Trolley to Yesterday
**The Incredible Journey of Lewis and Clarke*
Willoway
**Caddy Woodlawn*
The Wishgiver and Other Stories
The Secret Garden
**Summer of the Swans*
The Voyage of the Bassett
Artemis Fowl; Arctic Incident; Eternity Code
The Boggart; The Boggart and the Monster
Into the Land of the Unicorn; Song of the Wanderer
Walk Two Moons or any other books by author
Rodžina
The Pistachio Prescription
Matilda; Esio Trot or any book by the author
Daughter of the Sea
Half Magic or other books by the author
The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles
The Birchbark House
The Number Devil
**Slave Dancer*
**The Thief Lord; Ink Heart*
Wise Child
Picture of Hollis Woods; Corner of the Universe
**Julie of the Wolves* or any other book by author
The Wind in the Willows or other books by author
The Birthday Room
Any book by this author
Time Stops for No Mouse; Sands of Time
Our Only May Amelia; Boston Jane
A Stranger Came Ashore; Mermaid Summer
Any book by the author
Redwall
Trial by Journal
**A Wrinkle In Time*
**Number the Stars*
The Chronicles of Narnia
Knot in the Grain
Goodnight Mr. Tom
Belle Teal; Corner of the Universe
Gentle Ben
The Great Fire
The Other Side of Truth
**The Secret of NIMH*
**Island of the Blue Dolphins*
Time for Horatio
Eragon
The Great Gilly Hopkins
Any book by the author

Peck, Sylvia
Perkins, Lynne Rae
Pinkwater, Daniel
Rawlings, J.K.
Reeder, Carolyn
Rees, Celia
Reit, Seymour
Riordan, Rick
Ryan, Pam Munoz
Sacher, Louis
Scieszka, Jon
Selznick, Brian
Selden, George
Speare, Elizabeth
Terhune, Albert
Ullman, James Ramsey
Verne, Jules
Voight, Cynthia
Walden, Mark
Weeks, Sarah
Weston, Carol
Winterfield, Henry
Winthrop, Elizabeth
Yep, Laurence
Yolan, Jane

Seal Child
Criss Cross
Any book by the author
Any book by the author
**Shades of Gray*
Witch Child
Guns for General Washington
**The Lightning Thief*
Esperanza Rising
*Holes
Math Curse
**The Invention of Hugo Cabret*
Genie of Sutton Place
The Witch of Blackbird Pond
Lad: A Dog
Banner in the Sky
Around the World in Eighty Days
Homecoming
*H.I.V.E.
So B It
Melanie Martin Goes Dutch
Detectives in Togs
The Battle for the Castle; Castle in the Attic
Dragon of the Lost Sea other books by author
Wizard's Hall

*Teacher favorites

With questions or comments email: mgeorge@themastersschool.com

Suggested books for Music Class Grade Six:

Beethoven Lives Upstairs by Nichol and Cameron (or any book in this series)

Lives of the Composers by Krull and Hewitt

Have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you in September!