

June 2010



Dear Middle School Families (rising 5th-6th graders),

We are pleased to provide you with the 2010 Summer Reading assignment. As part of our “all-community” read, Middle School students will read *Three Cups of Tea: Young Reader’s Edition*, by Greg Mortenson. In addition, each student will read one required grade-level book. Finally, students will read one book of their choice on which they will complete a project.

Of course, we encourage students to read more than the minimum requirement.

Educators consider summer reading very important in developing life-long reading habits, in maintaining literacy skills and in promoting reading for pleasure. Studies have repeatedly shown that children who continue to read during the summer months perform better when school resumes in the fall (Jim Cornish, *Classroom Connect*, May 2003).

The Swain School library will again be open this summer on Wednesday mornings from June 16 – August 18 from 11:00 a.m.-noon. Please feel free to stop in and pick out a good book. In addition, all of the local public libraries have summer reading programs for middle school age students that allow students to earn prizes for reading. We highly recommend that you take advantage of this tremendous community resource.

Students are also encouraged to participate in Scholastic’s “Read for the World Record!” challenge. Students track their reading by recording the number of minutes they read each day at <http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/record/>. We created usernames in library class, so they are ready to start reading. If we exceed our school goal of 18,000 minutes read from June 10- August 31, then we will all be **Star Readers** next year!

The required summer reading books will be distributed to returning students later this week. If you have any questions or need help finding appropriate books, feel free to contact your current teacher or Ms. Armstrong for a recommendation. Don’t forget to check out the library blog for book recommendations and other library news: <http://www.swainlibrary.blogspot.com/>

We hope you have a great summer! Happy Reading!

Sincerely,

The Middle School English teachers and Kristen Armstrong

Required Summer Reading

Fifth Grade-

DiCamillo, Kate

THE TIGER RISING

After Rob's mother dies, he and his father move to a new town to get a fresh start, he discovers a caged tiger in the woods. The tiger triggers all sorts of magic in Rob's life-- for one thing, it takes his mind off his recently deceased mother and the itchy red blisters on his legs.

Sixth Grade-

Curtis, Christopher Paul

THE WATSONS GO TO BIRMINGHAM

The ordinary interactions and everyday routines of the Watsons, an African American family living in Flint, Michigan, are drastically changed after they go to visit Grandma in Alabama in the summer of 1963.

Seventh Grade-

Funke, Cornelia

THE THIEF LORD

Two orphaned brothers, Prosper and Bo, run away together to Venice rather than be separated. Once in Venice, they join a group of runaways who live in an abandoned movie theater and worship the Thief Lord. The adventure really takes off when the Thief Lord is hired to steal a wooden wing from an old Merry Go Round.

Eighth Grade-

Farmer, Nancy

HOUSE OF THE SCORPION

Matteo is a cloned human harvested to supply organs for El Patron. When he escapes from the Alacran Estate, he joins a group of slave children in a factory who are as mistreated as he. Pursued by El Patron's employees, Matt finds his way to freedom after many harrowing adventures. A very good futuristic novel.

There are no specific assignments for the required novels. They will be discussed and assessed in class and Town Meetings in early September.

In addition, students are required to read one additional book of their choice. For the free choice book, students must complete their choice of a Reader's Response activity. This assignment will be turned in and assessed on the first day of school. Please be sure that your project clearly demonstrates that you have read the book and encourages others to want to read it.

Reader's Response Activities – choose one for your free choice book.

All responses should be at least one page long, typed, double-spaced, with 12-point, Times New Roman font.

Advice Column

Describe one of the problems faced by a character and write advice for him/her. You may choose to be serious or humorous. Use the letter format common to newspaper advice columns, where the person with the problem writes for advice and the adviser writes back. Often, the person seeking advice "disguises" his or her name with a descriptive name associated with the problem.

Alternative Ending

Write an alternative ending for one of the books you read. You must actually write the ending as if you are the author. The narrator, point of view, and tense should stay consistent with the rest of the book.

Board Game Design

Create a board game that is based on your novel. Include 5-7 events from the novel as well as any facts that are relevant to the novel. Include all of the following: name of the game, objective of the players, scoring, rules, board design.

Book Banner and Book Talk

Create a three-page book banner to showcase your book. The first page should have the author and title of the book, the second page should have an image that represents the book, and the third page should include a 1-2 paragraph summary of the story and a paragraph about why you would recommend it. The three pages are then attached together to make a hanging book banner. In addition, you must prepare a 2-minute book talk that would get others excited about reading the book.

Book Promotion Video

Create a 2-3 minute video that will encourage others to read your book. Your video could include a summary, an interview with a character, a scene from the book, a book review, etc. It will be like a movie trailer, but for a book. Be creative and have fun! Just make sure that your video demonstrates that you read and enjoyed the book.

Casting the Movie Version

You are the director in charge of filming the novel. How will you cast it? Name specific actors for the roles. How will you handle the camera? What do you have in mind for setting and sound? How will you use color? Why?

Letter to the Author

Write a letter to the author posing questions about the book. Include at least ten questions. Be sure to start your letter with a greeting and some information about yourself and your reaction to the book. Follow correct business letter format.

Party Time

Plan a party, outing, or event that you think one of the characters would enjoy. The party should reflect his/her interests and likes. Include the following: theme, food, entertainment, decorations, dress, special effects, location, time, other guests. Write the plan below. The choices you make must fit the character and the novel world where he/she lives.

Postcard to a Character

Create a postcard for the novel following the directions below:

- The postcard is written from you to a character in the novel
- The stamp represents the setting
- The address is to a specific character in the novel
- Message includes one really important incident and 5 details
- Some specific indication of your opinion of the book is included
- Tack on a postscript (P.S.)
- The picture side has an attractive drawing with the title of the book and the author's name

Selling the Book

Design an advertisement that will sell your book to two of the following: the owner of a bookstore, a concerned parent, a reluctant reader, a movie watcher, someone from your family. For each advertisement, identify the need (why does the person need your book), create an attention getter, and show the satisfied customer (how he or she is happy with the book).

Timeline

Create an illustrated timeline of the major events in the novel. Make your own drawings or use computer art and include approximate dates if exact ones cannot be obtained. You should include 10-15 events on your timeline.

Which Character Is Coming to Dinner?

Invite one of the characters in your book to dinner, explaining why you chose that character above the others. Next, write a note to your mother telling her that you have invited someone to dinner. Describe the person to her; include some instructions for her to follow so that your guest will feel at home.