

8th Grade English Summer Reading

Student Guidelines: Everyone should read at least **SIX books**. The book MUST be at least 175 pgs. You do NOT need to actually purchase any of these books (EXCEPT FOR *THE GIVER*). We encourage you to check them out from your local library. You may also listen to audio books, and you're welcome to read additional books from the categories (ex. two of the social studies books) to get to six. Students should print and fill out the attached reading log and bring it to class the first day of school.

Must Read for Social Studies	Everyone must read <i>The Killer Angels</i> by Michael Shaara for Social Studies (including the "Introduction" and "Foreward" (if you don't read these, you will have no idea what is going on in the book). Before reading the novel, you should also read this Background on the Civil War . If curious, Ken Burns' documentary series <i>The Civil War</i> will provide much more detailed background.
Must Read for English	Everyone must PURCHASE and read <i>The Giver</i> by Lois Lowry for English class. Students must also complete the attached questions before the first day of school as they'll be participating in a Socratic Seminar and writing an essay the first week back to school. We recommend reading this novel and completing the questions right before school starts back so the details will be fresh in their minds. Students are welcome to also watch the movie once they've finished the novel. That being said, there are many significant differences between the novel and the movie, and students will find themselves unprepared to answer discussion questions if they've only watched the movie.
Must Read for English	Everyone must also read a partner book for our in class read of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> . There are two choices below that both look at the theme of loss of innocence within the context of racial discrimination and oppression. While there is no assignment attached to this book, students should be prepared to discuss the characters, plot, and themes of this partner novel when we read <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> in late August/early September.

	<i>The Hate U Give</i> by Angie Thomas
	<i>The Secret Life of Bees</i> by Sue Monk Kidd
Choice Books for English	The final three books are your choice. We encourage everyone to explore a variety of genres. Below are some resources for current titles.

Frequently asked questions:

1.) Is there a minimum page requirement?

Yes, 175 pages is the minimum for that book to count towards summer reading. However, we encourage students to pay attention to the reading level as well. While we always encourage students to read books that challenge them, more importantly we want students read books they can comprehend.

2.) Do graphic novels count as books?

Yes, they still have to be at least 175 pages.

3.) Do comic books count as books?

No, they don't.

4.) Do magazines count as books?

Not for this kind of assignment

5.) Do joke books count?

No, they book much have characters and a plot.

6.) Do I have to read every day?

We don't have a way to enforce this, obviously, but we're going to say yes, even if it's just a page. Take advantage of car rides, down time, etc.

7.) Do audiobooks count?

Yes, as long as you're reading along in the book. And the actual book still needs to be at least 175 pages.

8.) Can I read more than six books?

Yes, please! We are encouraging a book a week, but at a minimum, you are reading six books.

9.) Can I read more than one book from the required lists?

Of course, and it will count towards the total of 6.

10.) Will I have to do a book report or book talk for these books?

No, you won't have to do a book report or take a quiz on these books. However, you will be expected to participate in activities that require you to talk about the basic plot, main characters, and main theme (lesson learned). If it helps to take a few basic notes on the book, feel free to do that, especially if you're someone who plans to read a lot more than six books. You are welcome to bring those notes to class at the beginning of next year.

***The Giver* Socratic Seminar**

Within the first couple of days of class, you will participate in a Socratic Seminar about *The Giver*. You will need to type up and bring to class your answers. You are welcome to use your notes during the Seminar, but you can't read directly from your responses. Just as in 7th grade, you will receive a participation grade as well as a written grade. In order to receive full credit for the written grade, you **MUST**:

- ☐ cite evidence from the text where the directions indicate
- ☐ write in complete sentences
- ☐ answer the questions thoughtfully and in detail
- ☐ edit your work for spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.

You will receive more instructions about the Seminar itself from your 8th grade teacher. Given that you will complete this so early in the school year, we recommend that you read this novel and complete these questions right before school starts (rather than in June).

Part 1: Choose TEN to answer

Please take **notes** on the following topics. Be sure to find evidence from the text (you might want to include page numbers) to support your answers.

1. What role does memory play in the novel? How does the lack of memory affect the society?
2. How can one balance individual choice with responsibility to community?
3. Does our current society have any reflection of utopia or dystopia seen in *The Giver*?
4. What are the consequences for a society when people have choices?
5. When should one conform to the wishes or rules of others?
6. Do you feel that Rosemary had a true understanding of release when she requested it? Was her decision for release justified?
7. What moment in the book do you feel was the most important?
8. Is it better to live unaware of the truth of society, or, as Jonas feels, it is better to experience the memories and feelings that he learned about?
9. What changes would you make to the community? What rules do you like? Dislike? Why?
10. Do you think release is ever justified? What if this was an option in our society, would this ever be ok in our world?
11. Sameness was encouraged. Do you agree that we should all try to be more alike?
12. What does the community give up by following these rules?

13. For Jonas, what is the worst part of being a Receiver?

Part 2: Choose ONE to answer

Explain the following quotes:

1. “Your father means that you used a very generalized word, so meaningless that it has become almost obsolete.”
2. “If he had stayed, he would have starved in other ways. He would have lived a life hungry for feelings, for color, for love.”

Part 3:

Discuss the ambiguity of the last lines of the novel: “He heard people singing. Behind him, across vast distances of space and time, from the place he had left, he thought he heard music too. But perhaps it was only an echo.”

Ambiguity: quality of being open to more than one interpretation; inexactness

Part 4:

Video: Watch the ending clip of the Giver movie “[The Giver Final Speech and the Memories Return](#)” in youtube. Note, that it is quite different from the book in regards to the order of the action, but the point that is made is interesting. Do you agree that, “When people have the freedom to choose, they chose wrong”?

Name:

Summer Reading Log

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