SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENTS
GRADES 9-11
2017
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Letter to Students

Dear Half Hollow Hills Student,

Welcome to Summer Reading 2017! It is our hope that you will spend the summer months reading and enjoying the fiction and non-fiction books we have asked you to read over the next few months. The goal of summer reading is to give you the opportunity to explore newness – a concept, a place, a culture unfamiliar yet brought to life in a book. Emily Dickinson eloquently provides perspective:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{THERE is no frigate like a book} \\
\text{To take us lands away,} \\
\text{Nor any coursers like a page} \\
\text{Of prancing poetry.} \\
\text{This traverse may the poorest take} \\
\text{Without oppress of toll;} \\
\text{How frugal is the chariot} \\
\text{That bears a human soul!}
\end{align*}
\]

Whether you plan to travel across the world or across Long Island, we hope your summer reading books become a companion for you and a source of inspiration as well.

All students in grades nine through eleven\(^1\) are expected to complete summer reading. The benefits of reading during the summer months are applicable to all students and we hope that every one of you takes advantage of this opportunity. If you are interested in an alternative assignment, in lieu of reading a nonfiction book, you may participate in The New York Times Summer Reading Contest. For more information, click here. Please note, this contest may replace your nonfiction title, but you are still required to read a fiction title.

The following themes are covered:
Grade 9: Lives in Transition
Grade 10: War and Peace
Grade 11: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

If you are participating in The New York Times Summer Reading Contest (in lieu of reading a nonfiction book), articles can be on any topic and do not have to fall within the grade level theme.

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\(^{1}\) Students in AP, College English, College Writing, Contemporary Literature, and Senior Experience cover assignments specific to these courses.
Your assignment is as follows:
1. Choose one fiction and one non-fiction book related to your grade level theme to read over the summer. (In lieu of a nonfiction book, participate in the New York Times Summer Reading Contest.)

In September:
2. Bring in your signed parent letter that you read both a fiction and nonfiction book (or participated in the New York Times contest in lieu of a nonfiction title).

3. You may be asked to share a response to the books either in a book chat or in a brief written assignment. (If you chose to complete the NYT contest, simply print out your entries.)

Students in AP, Honors College English, College Writing/Contemporary Literature, and Senior Experience have assignments specific to these courses.

If you have any questions about Summer Reading 2017, please contact Leslie Pilgrim, District-wide Interim Coordinator of Secondary Language Arts and Reading at 631.592.3186.

Enjoy your books!

Sincerely,
The English Language Arts Department of Half Hollow Hills
Managing Your Reading

- Try to read every day. You can read after breakfast or before dinner. If you are using an audio book downloaded to your e-reader you can read almost anywhere. (Please don’t try to read and cross the street at the same time though!)

- Have a purpose for reading. Is there a question you have about the book? Are you in the middle of the book and wondering about a character’s choices or motivations? Are you wondering where the author is taking the story? Are you looking for something to connect to or relate to your own life? Each time you read, read with purpose.

- Discuss what you are reading with someone else – a friend, a parent, a sibling, a camp counselor, the librarian, or the bookstore clerk to name a few. Talking about a book helps you understand it better and motivates you to go back and read more.

- Does the book remind you of something you read before? Are you making a text-to-text connection? Try to find that other text (it can be another book, a movie, a newspaper or a magazine article, a website) and revisit it to strengthen the connection. It may also help you understand and appreciate your main text even more.

- Remember that reading is a way to communicate. What message is the author trying to share with you, the reader? How will what you read impact your own life? Reflect on these questions as you read.
How to Choose a Book

- Read the back of the book. Often the synopsis on the back (hard covers have an additional synopsis on the inside cover) will give you a brief overview of the plot and themes in the book.

- Think about the title. Sometimes authors create titles that are a clue or a representation of the major themes in the book.

- Talk to the bookstore clerk or your neighborhood librarian. These professionals can be used as a resource in finding a book which appeals to both your interests and to the requirements of the project.

- Flip through the book. Read a chapter while sitting in the library or bookstore. Make predictions about how you think the story will develop.

- There are many websites that offer guidance in choosing a summer reading text. Here are a few from which to choose:
  - http://www.nypl.org/voices/blogs/blog-channels/sta
  - http://www.googlelitttrips.org/
  - http://www.guysread.com/
  - http://www.teenreads.com
  - http://www.hhhlteens.blogspot.com/

- Go online to http://www.barnesandnoble.com or http://www.amazon.com and keyword a title. Typing in a title will lead you to information about the specific book you have chosen. You can read the publisher’s synopsis as well as comments from people who have read the book.

- Visit the iTunes website http://itunes.apple.com/us/genre/books/id38?mt=11 to see a list of iBook categories. Click on a category of interest. You can also visit http://itunes.apple.com/us/genre/ios-books/id6018?mt=8 to view a list of audio book applications for iTunes.
June 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Please review this English project with your son or daughter and sign below to confirm that your child completed the assignment.

This letter should be returned in September to your child’s English teacher for the 2017-2018 school year.

I have read the above information regarding the English Department’s summer reading assignment and confirm that my child read both a fiction and nonfiction book (or participated in the New York Times Summer Reading Contest) over the summer.

Student’s name (PRINT) ______________________________________

Fiction Choice ______________________________________________

Non-Fiction Choice __________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature _____________________________________

Date ____________________

Thank you.
SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENTS
Grades 9 - 11
2017
NINTH-GRADE

Ninth grade English covers fiction and non-fiction literature that centers on the theme *Lives in Transition*. We will explore the following essential questions:

- What is freedom? What lessons can we learn about human rights through literature and life?
- What is justice? Does an individual have the ability to create change?
- What is a hero? Are our lives governed by fate or free will?
- What is love? How do we evolve/transform from our personal experiences?

You must choose one fiction and one non-fiction text. Recommendations are provided in the lists below, but you are free to make an independent choice. Remember that texts in the school curriculum cannot be used as summer reading selections.²

**Fiction**

*Fat Kid Rules the World*, K.L. Going  
*Homeless Bird*, Gloria Whelan  
*Life As We Knew It*, Susan Beth Pfeffer  
*Marcelo in the Real World*, Francisco X. Stork  
*Girl in the Blue Coat*, Monica Hesse

**Non-Fiction**

*I'd Like to Apologize to Every Teacher I Ever Had: My Year as a Rookie Teacher at Northeast High*, Tony Danza  
*Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, Marjane Satrapi  
*The Pact, Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fullfill a Dream*, Drs. Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, and Rameck Hunt  
*Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—The World’s Most Dangerous Weapon* by Steve Sheinkin

When you return to school in September, please make sure to **bring your signed parent letter** with you.

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² Curriculum maps for grades 9 through 12 can be found on the Half Hollows Hills webpage under the headings Academics, English Language Arts, Curriculum Maps. The following link may also be used:  
http://www.halfhollowhills.k12.ny.us/page.cfm?p=976063
TENTH-GRADE

Tenth grade English covers fiction and non-fiction literature that centers on the theme *War and Peace: What is the Paradox Within?* We will explore the following essential questions:

- How does literature reflect the human experience?
- How does one’s social and cultural environment influence or shape one’s identity?
- What are the ethical implications of our decisions?
- Which is more powerful: love of country or love of self?

You must choose one fiction and one non-fiction text. Recommendations are provided in the lists below, but you are free to make an independent choice. Remember that texts in the school curriculum cannot be used as summer reading selections:³

**Fiction**
- *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini
- *Code Talker*, Joseph Bruchac
- *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- *The Book Thief*, Markus Zusak
- *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck
- *The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway

**Non-Fiction**
- *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, Ishmael Beah
- *Decoded*, Jay-Z
- *Farewell to Manzanar*, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston
- *Lone Survivor*, Marcus Luttrell
- *Maus I: A Survivor’s Tale: My Father Bleeds History*, Art Spiegelman
- *Red Scarf Girl*, Ji-li Jiang

When you return to school in September, please make sure to bring your signed parent letter with you.

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³ Curriculum maps for grades 9 through 12 can be found on the Half Hollows Hills webpage under the headings Academics, English Language Arts, Curriculum Maps. The following link may also be used: [http://www.halfhollowhills.k12.ny.us/page.cfm?p=976063](http://www.halfhollowhills.k12.ny.us/page.cfm?p=976063)
ELEVENTH-GRADE

Eleventh grade English covers fiction and non-fiction literature that centers on the theme *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness*. We will explore the following essential questions:

- To what extent do competing values impede upon or shape the American Dream?
- How do race, gender, and economic status affect one’s social standing in America?
- What are the vices and virtues of the American Dream?
- How is the American family affected by various social factors?

You must choose one fiction and one non-fiction text. Recommendations are provided in the lists below, but you are free to make an independent choice. Remember that texts in the school curriculum cannot be used as summer reading selections:4

**Fiction**
- *Little Brother*, Cory Doctorow
- *On the Road*, Jack Kerouac
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, Sherman Alexie
- *The Invention of Wings*, Sue Monk Kidd
- *The Jungle*, Upton Sinclair

**Non-Fiction**
- *A Brilliant Solution, Inventing the American Constitution*, Carol Berkin
- *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop, A History of the Hip Hop Generation*, Jeff Chang
- *Life on the Color Line*, Gregory Howard Williams
- *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*, by Barbara Ehrenreich
- *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell
- *The Color of Water*, James McBride

When you return to school in September, please make sure to bring your signed parent letter with you.

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4 Curriculum maps for grades 9 through 12 can be found on the Half Hollows Hills webpage under the headings Academics, English Language Arts, Curriculum Maps. The following link may also be used: [http://www.halfhollowhills.k12.ny.us/page.cfm?p=976063](http://www.halfhollowhills.k12.ny.us/page.cfm?p=976063)
New York Times
Summer Reading Contest
Guidelines
Seventh Annual New York Times Summer Reading Contest
This PDF is adapted from a blog post published in May, 2017. You can find it here.

Here’s how the contest works, in a nutshell:

Every Friday from June 16 to Aug. 25 we’ll pose the same question: What interested you most in The Times this week? Why?

Anyone 13 to 19 years old from anywhere in the world can post an answer any week until Friday, Aug. 26, and contestants can choose from any Times article, essay, video, interactive or photograph published in 2016, on any topic they like.

Every Tuesday starting July 5 we will announce winners from a previous week and publish their writing on the blog. Scroll down to find more details and tips, all of which are also on this PDF.

Q. What kinds of responses are you looking for?
A. We don’t care what you choose or whether you loved or hated it; what we care about is what you have to say about why you picked it.

If you don’t believe us, scroll through six years worth of winners.

They have written on serious topics like gender, race and identity, space exploration and 21st-century concentration camps, but they have also written on Disney shows, bagels, running and Jon Stewart withdrawal.

Whatever the subject, you’ll see that the best pieces year after year make both personal connections to the news and go beyond the personal to discuss the broader questions and ideas that the topic raises.

So whether you were moved by an article, enlightened by an essay, bowled over by a photo, irked by an editorial or inspired by a feature, find something in The Times that genuinely interests you and tell us why, as honestly and originally as you can.

Q. What are the rules?
A. First, here is a PDF of all the rules and details in this post. Please share.

— We will post the same Student Opinion question every Friday, starting June 16. Each will ask, “What interested you most in The Times this week? Why?” That is where you should post your picks (and reasons) any time until the next Friday. Then we will close that post to comments and open a new one with the same question. That means that students can write in any day until Friday, Aug. 25, at 7 a.m. Eastern when the contest ends.

As soon as the contest starts, we will keep an up-to-date link to that week’s question at the top of this page.

— You can choose from anything published in the print paper or on NYTimes.com in 2017, including videos, graphics, slide shows and podcasts.

— Feel free to participate every week, but we allow only one submission per person per week.

— The contest is open to teenagers only — anyone from 13 to 19 years old, from anywhere in the world.

— Our commenting system allows responses up to 1,500 characters, which is somewhere between 250 and 300 words.

— Make sure to provide us with the full URL or headline (for example, “To Fall in Love With Anyone, Do This,” or http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/fashion/modern-love-to-fall-in-love-with-anyone-do-this.html).
Q. Who will be judging my work?

Q. When should I check to see whether my submission won?
Every Tuesday from July 4 to Sept. 5, we will publish a previous week’s winner or winners in a separate post. We will also celebrate the winners on Twitter and Facebook.

Q. How do I participate in this contest if I don’t have a digital subscription?
NYTimes.com has a digital subscription system in which readers have free access to 10 articles each month. If you exceed that limit, you will be asked to become a digital subscriber.

One thing you should know, however, is that The Learning Network and all its posts, as well as all Times articles linked from them, are accessible without a digital subscription. That means that if you use any of the articles we have linked to on this blog for summer reading, they will not count as part of the 10-article limit. And you can use anything published in 2017.

The NYT Now app for iPhones is also free and offers daily articles and multimedia.

Q. How do I prove to my teacher that I participated?
A. When you comment, make sure to check the box that asks you if you would like to be emailed when your comment is published.

If you do so, the system will send you a link to your comment, which you can use to show your teacher, your parents, your friends or anyone else you’d like to impress.

If you participated last summer, you know that we had some trouble with that system and had to hand-email confirmations to many of you. Our tech support team assures us the problem has been solved, but please note that you will not get an email until the comment has been approved, which may take up to 48 hours over weekends.

Q. How can teachers, librarians and parents use this challenge?
A. Over the years, adults have told us over and over that participating in this contest has made their students both more aware of and more interested in what’s going on in the world.

If that’s not enough of a reason to assign it, our contest is also an easy way to add more nonfiction to your students’ reading lists — and to encourage teenagers to make their own choices about what to read, as anything published in The Times in 2017 is fair game.

Thank you for making this contest a hit year after year, and please spread the word that it’s back for 2017.

Good luck. Please post any questions in the comments and we’ll answer you there. We will also add the link to the top of this post on June 16, when the contest begins.