



Little Red School House & Elisabeth Irwin High School

Summer Reading Assignment
Seventh Grade
June 2007

“Habits of Good Readers”

In seventh grade, we will be reading many books over the course of the year. Some we will read as a class and some you will read independently. In order to get the most out of your reading experiences, we will need to examine the habits of good readers. Your summer assignment will prepare you for the fun and challenging work you will face in Reading Workshop when you begin seventh grade in the fall.

I. Reading Assignment:

This summer you will be required to read THREE books (although you are encouraged to read many more). One book can be of your own choosing. We only require that it be a piece of literature (novel, short story collection, or poetry collection). This can be an opportunity for you to read a new book by a favorite author or to explore a favorite genre. This might also be a time to try a different kind of book from what you usually read. Please talk to Matthew, Victor, Jennifer or Mark for suggestions.

In addition to the book above, you are required to read two books from the Seventh and Eighth Grade Reading List (see attached). All of the book choices are interesting, thought-provoking reads – including both older and contemporary classics. We hope you will enjoy discovering books that you might not normally choose on your own! You may know of a book that is not on this list and be wondering if it’s considered a classic. Feel free to email Matthew (mrosen@lrei.org), Victor (vdiggs@lrei.org), or Mark (msilberberg@lrei.org) this summer to get your classic “okay’d”.

II. Writing Assignment (for the two books from the Reading List):

As you read your two books, you will construct 3 responses for each book. You will respond to each book using the Reading Strategies, which are attached. Please note that we will explore these strategies in greater detail throughout the seventh grade. This summer writing will help to familiarize you with the Reading Workshop Process.

Your Reader’s Notebook should be a composition-style marble notebook with bound pages. **DO NOT USE A SPIRAL NOTEBOOK.**

Remember that your reading responses are NOT plot summaries. They are responses to the reading strategies. These entries should reflect your thoughts about the reading.



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Reading Workshop Strategies: A Preview

Here is a list of our seventh grade reading strategies. At a minimum, you should write three entries per book (that's a total of six entries for the two books). Each entry should be a 1 to 1 ½ pages in length and should have one of the strategies listed below as its focus. Your response should address each of the prompts given for the strategy and should be written in your Reader's Notebook. Your six entries should cover each of the strategies listed below. You are of course more than welcome to write additional entries for each book.

1. Selecting an Independent Reading Book

- What criteria did you use to select this particular title?
- Did you judge the book by its cover? By the blurb on the back?
- What strategies did you use for selecting this book?
- How did your initial selection impression compare to your feeling about the book after you had read it?

2. Making a Personal Connection to a Text

- Relate specific experiences of the main character to your own experiences.
- Connect the plot or theme of your book to something you've read or seen (such as another book or movie).

3. Visualizing the Main Character

- Try to imagine what the character looks like.
- Look for descriptive passages that give detail about characters (be specific). Use direct evidence from the text.
- Note facial features and describe height/ weight/ eye color/ age
- Describe body images.
- Clothing
- Other detail
- How does this information help you to better understand the character and his/her experience?

4. Conflict and the Main Character

- Identify some of the problems your character encounters.
- Comment on character's attitude or approach to the problem.
- Explain (or predict) how he or she solves the problem.

5. Setting

- What is the book's setting?
- How would you describe or characterize your book's setting?
- What words or phrases does your author use to tell you about the setting? (be specific)
- How does your book's physical description of landscape and terrain inform, or help create, the mood or atmosphere of the book?

6. Selecting a Meaningful Quote

- Pick a passage or a series of passages from your book that you particularly enjoyed.
- What do you enjoy about these passages? (Is it the author's language, the content itself, or does the passage somehow allude to a greater theme?)
- How does the passage relate to the overall theme of the book. Explain.

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III. Assessment:

When you return in the fall, we will collect your Reader's Notebooks and assess them. The assessment criteria are listed below:

Use: *Are you using your notebook to extend your thinking about the books or are you just writing plot summaries? Did you use the suggested strategies and prompts to generate your entries?*

Connections: *Do your entries address the full arc of the book (beginning, middle, and end)? If you raise questions about the text in your earlier entries, do you respond to these questions in later entries?*

Thoughtfulness: *Do the entries in your notebook demonstrate time, effort and a respect for the process or do the entries seem rushed and poorly thought-out?*

Presentation: *Are your entries dated? Do they have headings? Are they legible? Are there things in your reader's notebook that do not belong there?*

Summer Classics for Seventh and Eighth Grade Students

Adams, Richard. Watership Down.

A warren of Berkshire rabbits flee the destruction of their home by a land developer. As they search for a safe haven, skirting danger at every turn, we become acquainted with the band and its strong sense of community. Adams has crafted a touching, involving world in the dirt and scrub of the English countryside, complete with its own folk history and language (the book comes with a "lapine" glossary, a guide to rabbitese). As much about freedom, ethics, and human nature as it is about a bunch of bunnies looking for a warm hidey-hole, *Watership Down* will continue to make the transition from classroom desk to bedside table for many generations to come. (Jen Hubert Swan's FAVORITE book of ALL TIME)

Alcott, Louisa May. Little Women

Little Women is the heartwarming story of the March family that has thrilled generations of readers. It is the story of four sisters--Jo, Meg, Amy and Beth-- and of the courage, humor and ingenuity they display to survive poverty and the absence of their father during the Civil War.

Anaya, Rudolfo. Bless Me, Ultima.

Ultima, a curandera, one who cures with herbs and magic, comes to Antonio Marez's New Mexico family when he is six years old, and she helps him discover himself in the magical secrets of the pagan past. Besides winning the Premio Quinto Sol national Chicano literary award, this novel of a young boy in New Mexico in the 1940s has sold more than 300,000 copies in paperback since its 1973 debut.

Angelou, Maya. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

In this first of five volumes of autobiography, poet Maya Angelou recounts a youth filled with disappointment, frustration, tragedy, and finally hard-won independence. Marvelously told, with Angelou's "gift for language and observation," this "remarkable autobiography by an equally remarkable black woman from Arkansas captures, indelibly, a world of which most Americans are shamefully ignorant."

Bradbury, Ray. The Illustrated Man

This is one of the classics from the golden age of sci-fi--sixteen tales of horror and terror in the tattoos on an "illustrated" man's body. Even though most were written in the 1940s and 1950s, these 18 classic stories will be just as chillingly effective 50 years from now.

Bronte, Charlotte. Jane Eyre

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A headstrong heroine, a dashing gentleman, a dark and brooding house with a terrible secret in the attic. A classic novel written in the very best Gothic tradition.

Cather, Willa. O Pioneers!

The story of an immigrant family's struggle to save their Nebraska farm. Cather's placement of a strong and capable woman at the center of the story, her realistic depiction of life on the midwestern prairie, and her vivid portrayal of the immigrant experience at the turn of the century make *O Pioneers!* a true American classic.

Cormier, Robert. The Chocolate War

Does Jerry Renault dare to disturb the universe? You wouldn't think that his refusal to sell chocolates during his school's fundraiser would create such a stir, but it does; it's as if the whole school comes apart at the seams. To some, Jerry is a hero, but to others, he becomes a scapegoat--a target for their pent-up hatred. And Jerry? He's just trying to stand up for what he believes, but perhaps there is no way for him to escape becoming a pawn in this game of control...

Dickens, Charles. Oliver Twist

One of Dickens's most popular novels, this is the story of an orphan raised in a workhouse, who runs away to London only to be captured by thieves from whom he eventually escapes. This novel is a morality tale and a detective story rolled into one and presents some of Dickens's darkest characters: Bill Sikes, the murderer; Fagin, the master thief; and the leering Artful Dodger.

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. The Hound of the Baskervilles

What's the truth behind the legend of the hound of the Baskervilles? Is it really a devil-beast that's haunting the lonely moors? Enter Sherlock Holmes to find the answer, in this, the only full-length novel ever written by the creator of one of the most popular and enduring detective series ever written.

Flagg, Fannie. Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café

A folksy, funny and endearing story of life in a small town in Alabama in the Depression and in the 1980s. It is the tale of a fierce friendship between two women from the 1920's and 30's, Igdie and Ruth, and how their story inspires a modern woman who has almost given up on life. Among revelations big and small, Fannie Flagg mixes direct and empowering confrontations with racism, sexism, and ageism with the colorful and endearing language of the depression-era South and the cafe's recipes for grits, collard greens, and, of course, fried green tomatoes.

Frank, Anne. The Diary of a Young Girl

A beloved classic since its initial publication in 1947, this vivid, insightful journal is a fitting memorial to the gifted Jewish teenager who died at Bergen-Belsen, Germany, in 1945.

Gallman, Kiki. I Dreamed of Africa.

At the age of 25, Kuki Gallmann moved to Kenya with her future husband, where they established a vast ranch. But Africa's beauty doesn't come without a price, and when tragedy struck, Kuki found herself pregnant and alone with her young son and 90,000 acres of Africa to oversee.

Garden, Nancy. Annie on My Mind

The modern classic of two girls who dared to love each other despite social taboos. Looking back on her high school experiences, the now mature Liza narrates a story of friendship, betrayal and loss between her and Annie, her first love.

Grahame, Kenneth. The Wind in the Willows.

Since its beginnings as a series of stories told to Kenneth Grahame's young son, *The Wind in the Willows* has gone on to become one of the best-loved children's books of all time. The timeless story of Toad, Rat, Mole, and Badger has delighted readers of all ages for more than eighty years.

Greene, Bette. Summer of My German Soldier

When her small hometown in Arkansas becomes the site of a camp housing German prisoners during World War II, 12-year-old Patty Bergen learns what it means to open her heart. Although she's Jewish, she begins to see a prison escapee, Anton, not as a Nazi--but as a lonely, frightened young man with feelings not unlike her own, who understands and appreciates her in a way her parents never will. And Patty is willing to risk losing family, friends--even her freedom--for what has quickly become the most important part of her life.

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Hurston, Zora Neale. Their Eyes Were Watching God

Fair and long-legged, independent and articulate, Janie Crawford sets out to be her own person -- no mean feat for a black woman in the '30s. Janie's quest for identity takes her through three marriages and into a journey back to her roots.

Huxley, Aldous. Brave New World.

Originally published in 1932, Huxley's terrifying vision of a controlled and emotionless future "Utopian" society is truly startling in its prediction of modern scientific and cultural phenomena, including test-tube babies and rampant drug abuse.

Huxley, Elspeth. The Flame Trees of Thika: memories of an African childhood.

In an open cart Elspeth Huxley set off with her parents to travel to Thika in Kenya. As pioneering settlers, they built a house of grass, ate off a damask cloth spread over packing cases, and discovered--the hard way--the world of the African. For a young girl, it was a time of adventure and freedom, and Huxley paints an unforgettable portrait of growing up among the Masai and Kikuyu people, discovering both the beauty and the terrors of the jungle, and enduring the rugged realities of the pioneer life.

Jackson, Shirley. The Haunting of Hill House

Five strangers meet at Hill House--a notorious estate in New England to take part in a paranormal science experiment. Hill House is a foreboding structure of towers, buttresses, Gothic spires, gargoyles, strange angles, and rooms within rooms--a place "without kindness, never meant to be lived in...." Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* has unnerved readers since its original publication in 1959. A tale of subtle, psychological terror, it has earned its place as one of the significant haunted house stories of our time.

Keyes, Daniel. Flowers for Algernon

In this classic story that inspired the hit movie *Charlie*, Charlie Gordon, a mentally challenged adult who cleans floors and toilets, becomes a genius through an experimental operation. But when his new intelligence begins to wane, Charlie must confront the loss of all he has learned.

Knowles, John. A Separate Peace

The volatile world of male adolescence provides the backdrop for John Knowles' engrossing tale of love, hate, war, and peace. Sharing a room at Devon, an exclusive New England prep school, in the summer prior to World War II, Gene and Phineas form a complex bond of friendship that draws out both the best and worst characteristics of each boy and leads ultimately to violence, a confession, and the betrayal of trust.

London, Jack. White Fang

In the desolate, frozen wilds of northwest Canada, a wolf cub soon finds himself the sole survivor of his litter. Son of Kiche -- half-wolf, half-dog -- and the aging wolf One Eye, he is thrust into a savage world where each day becomes a fight to stay alive. This adventure set in the wild Yukon about a wild dog who learns to live with humans is not to be missed.

Morrison, Toni. The Bluest Eye

This tragic study of a black adolescent girl's struggle to achieve white ideals of beauty and her consequent descent into madness was acclaimed as an eloquent indictment of some of the more subtle forms of racism in American society. Pecola Breedlove longs to have "the bluest eye" and thus to be acceptable to her family, schoolmates, and neighbors, all of whom have convinced her that she is ugly.

Paton, Alan. Cry the Beloved Country

Stephen Kumalo, a Zulu pastor, and his son, Absalom, experience the joys and tragedies of a South African community struggling with the injustice of apartheid

Rawls, Wilson. Where the Red Fern Grows

Billy and his precious coonhound pups romp relentlessly through the Ozarks, trying to "tree" the elusive raccoon. In time, the inseparable trio wins the coveted gold cup in the annual coon-hunt contest, captures the wily ghost coon, and bravely fights with a mountain lion. But tragedy is waiting right around the corner...

Smith, Betty. A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

Francie Nolan, avid reader, penny-candy connoisseur, and adroit observer of human nature, has much to ponder in colorful, turn-of-the-century Brooklyn. Betty Smith's poignant, honest novel created a big stir when it was first published over 50 years

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ago. Her frank writing about life's squalor was alarming to some of the more genteel society, but the book's humor and pathos ensured its place in the realm of classics.

Steinbeck, John. Of Mice and Men

The plot of this well-known classic centers on George Milton and Lennie Small, itinerant ranch hands who dream of one day owning a small farm. George acts as a father figure to Lennie, who is large and simple minded, calming him and helping to rein in his immense physical strength. When a terrible accident involving Lennie takes place, George has an equally terrible decision to make concerning his friend.

Stevenson, Robert Lewis. Treasure Island

Climb aboard for the swashbuckling adventure of a lifetime. *Treasure Island* has enthralled (and caused slight seasickness) for decades. With its dastardly plot and motley crew of rogues and villains, (including the famous Long John Silver) it seems unlikely that anyone who ever reads this exciting classic will ever forget it!

Stoker, Bram. Dracula

This is the classic, hypnotic story of the undead creatures of the night--and the human lives they touch—as they relentlessly seek to satiate an accursed craving for their only sustenance: human blood. A Gothic novel of immense proportions, *Dracula* has only strengthened its grip on the public over the course of the last century.

Thomas, Piri. Down These Mean Streets

As a dark-skinned Puerto Rican, born in 1928, Piri Thomas faced with painful immediacy the absurd contradictions of America's racial attitudes (among people of all colors) in a time of wrenching social change. Three decades have not dimmed the luster of his jazzy prose, rich in Hispanic rhythms and beat-generation slang.

Tolkien, J.R.R. The Hobbit

Bilbo Baggins loves his cozy hobbit hole and hopes to never have to go farther than his front door. No such luck, however; soon 13 fortune-seeking dwarves arrive on his doorstep in search of a burglar, and before he can even grab his hat or an umbrella, Bilbo Baggins is swept out his door and into a dangerous adventure. Prequel to *The Lord of the Rings*.

Twain, Mark. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

Mark Twain's classic novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, tells the story of a teenaged misfit who finds himself floating on a raft down the Mississippi River with an escaping slave, Jim. In the course of their perilous journey, Huck and Jim meet adventure, danger, and a cast of characters who are sometimes menacing and often hilarious.

Van der Post, Laurens. A Story Like the Wind.

Young Francois Joubert, living in the remote region bordering the Kalahari Desert, thrills to the wonder of the still-primitive land until his idyllic world is shattered by the political violence of contemporary Africa.

Wright, Richard. Black Boy

Black Boy is a classic of American autobiography, a subtly crafted narrative of Richard Wright's journey from innocence to experience in the Jim Crow South. An enduring story of one young man's coming of age during a particular time and place, *Black Boy* remains a seminal text in our history about what it means to be a man, black, and Southern in America.

Wright, Richard. Native Son.

Widely acclaimed as one of the finest books ever written on race and class divisions in America, this powerful novel reflects the forces of poverty, injustice, and hopelessness that continue to shape our society. The plot charts the decline of Bigger Thomas, a young African-American imprisoned for two murders--the accidental smothering of his white employer's daughter and the deliberate killing of his girlfriend to silence her. In his cell Thomas confronts his growing sense of injustice and concludes that violence is the only alternative to submission to white society.