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Middle School

Summer Reading, 2023 - 2024

**Rising Grade 8 English**

Follow the guidelines below.

Read ***This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women*** by Jay Allison

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This is a collection of short personal essays. Peruse the collection and choose 15 essays to read closely. Please keep a reader’s journal and record your thoughts and reactions. For example, what drew you to a specific essay? What makes an essay memorable? Do you agree with a specific point of view – before reading it? Afterwards? Where do you think beliefs come from?

Read at least one work from this list and keep a reader’s journal (guideline below).

*Piecing Me Together* by Renee Watson

*Miles Morales Suspended* by Jason Reynolds

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred D. Taylor

*Call of the Wild*, Jack London

*The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkein

*The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman

* Pick a journal or notebook: Please do not use a digital journal.
* Include an entry header indicating date and some kind of title: Each time you sit down to read, make an entry. Entries do not need to be the same length or the same type. Note page numbers referred to.
  + Make some entries creative:
    - If you are artistic, draw or paint something that caught your imagination;
    - If you are a poet, write poems or lyrics about something that happened, about a character or place.
    - Make a map, showing where events take place, or where the character has travelled.
    - Make a chart or mind map of all the characters and their relationships.
  + Make some entries academic:
    - Personal thoughts and reactions: Be reflective; think about why you may be responding the way you are. Leave room for recording later reflections on the same topic/event/character. One way to do this is to take notes on the left-hand page of notebook and reserve the right-hand page for later additions, comments, questions, and so on.
    - Comments/questions on plot, structure, point of view, characterization, or setting:
    - Plot: What is the main conflict/minor conflicts? How are conflicts related? What causes them? Where does the climax occur and what causes it? How is conflict resolved? Do some conflicts go unresolved
    - Narrative Structure: Is the narrative chronological, or does it jump around in time, with flashbacks? Does the writer use foreshadowing? Irony?
    - Point of view: Who tells the story? Do you trust the narrator to give an honest account of events and characters, or is the narrator obviously biased? How does the narrator affect your reading of the story?
    - Characterization: How are characters introduced and developed? Who do you find sympathetic and whom do you dislike? How and why do characters change? What do they learn? What problems do they have? Do they have traits that contradict one another and therefore cause internal conflicts? Do they experience epiphanies?
    - Setting: Where does the action take place? (Think not only about geographic location but also physical space: indoors, outdoors, small rooms, palatial homes, etc.) Describe this place. At what period in history does the action unfold? What is going on in society at that time that is affecting the character or causing conflict?
    - Quote and comment: Record and discuss favorite or interesting quotes in your journal
  + Final impact of the story. At the end of the book, take some time to record the overall impact the story had on you. Did the story flow well and keep you engaged, or did it feel uneven? What impact did the characters have, if any, on you personally?