

Grade 6 Summer Reading

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All incoming 6th grade students MUST read TWO books this summer. One is required, one is a choice. (Naturally, you are welcome to read as many more books as you want!) The books on the list can be acquired from your public library, any bookstore or online book source. You do NOT have a written project to turn in, but you will be assessed on each of your readings at the start of the 2009-10 school year. You must be prepared for each assessment by the first Friday of the school year. Also, be sure to visit the class website (will be updated mid-summer) and begin to familiarize yourself with it. You will be using it frequently throughout your 6th grade year. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via e-mail. I look forward to working with each of you next year! Happy reading!

Required Reading:

***The Lightning Thief* By Rick Riordan**

All incoming 6th grade students MUST read this book. You will be assessed through a class discussion (Seminar). You will be graded on the accuracy and depth of your discussion about the questions below.

Summary: When 12-year-old Percy Jackson learns that his true father is Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea, he undertakes a dangerous quest across the United States to retrieve a stolen lightning bolt and stop a war between the gods. **The Lightning Thief** provides a high-
explore elements of the Classical hero's quest rendered in a modern-day setting, and to discuss such relevant issues as learning disabilities, the nature of family, and themes of loyalty, friendship and faith.

Be prepared to discuss ALL of the following questions in a class discussion. I strongly suggest you write out your answers or take notes while reading to help you.

1. Percy says, "Mr. Brunner expected me to be as good as everybody else, despite the fact I had dyslexia and I had never made above a C- in my life. No – he didn't expect me to be as good. He expected me to be better." What do you think of Mr. Brunner as a teacher? Explain why.
2. Dreams play an important role in the narrative. At Montauk, Percy first dreams of a horse and eagle fighting on the beach. Later, he dreams of a voice from the pit. As he gets closer to Los Angeles, his dreams get scarier and more specific. What would the book be like without these dream episodes? Is there information that Percy can only get from his dreams?
3. Percy's fight with Echidna and the Chimera is a low point for his morale. He begins to doubt that he is capable of being a hero. Why does he feel this way, and do you think his doubts are reasonable? What does this fight scene reveal about Percy's character?

4. As the book progresses, we learn more about Annabeth's family life, and her unhappy history with her father. How does this compare with Percy's own family? How does this help the two half-bloods overcome their mutual distrust?
5. Percy's trip to the Underworld does not turn out as he suspected. What do you think of Percy's decision to leave his mother behind? What does the scene in the throne room tell you about the three friends – Annabeth, Grover and Percy?
6. How does the last line of the prophecy – *you shall fail to save what matters most in the end* – come true? What do you think of this ending? Did Percy make the right choice? What would you have done in his place?

Choice Reading:

You MUST read one (1) of the following. You will take a test on this book when you return in the fall, so make sure to take notes to help you remember. Test will be multiple choice, short answer and extended response. It will cover: characters, setting, plot and theme.

My Side of the Mountain (realistic fiction)

By Jean Craighead George

Terribly unhappy in his family's crowded New York City apartment, Sam Gribble runs away to the solitude-and danger-of the mountains, where he finds a side of himself he never knew.

A young boy relates his adventures during the year he spends living alone in the Catskill Mountains including his struggle for survival, his dependence on nature, his animal friends, and his ultimate realization that he needs human companionship.

Number the Stars (historical fiction)

by Lois Lowry

Ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen and her best friend Ellen Rosen often think about life before the war. But it's now 1943, and their life in Copenhagen is filled with school, food shortages, and the Nazi soldiers marching in their town. When the Nazis begin "relocating" the Jews of Denmark, Ellen moves in with the Johansens and pretends to be part of the family. And as Annemarie helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis and embarks on a dangerous mission, she learns how to be brave and courageous -- to save her best friend's life.

The Phantom Tollbooth (fantasy)

by Norton Juster, Jules Feiffer (illus.)

This ingenious fantasy centers around Milo, a bored ten-year old who comes home to find a large toy tollbooth sitting in his room. Joining forces with a watchdog named Tock, Milo drives through the tollbooth's gates and begins a memorable journey. He meets such characters as the foolish yet lovable Humbug, the Mathematician, and the not-so-wicked "Which," Faintly Macabre, who gives Milo the "impossible" mission of returning two princesses to the Kingdom of Wisdom. Along his journey, Milo learns the importance of words and numbers -- and learns to appreciate life.

A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science (nonfiction)

by John Fleischman

If an explosion sent a steel rod through your head, would you be able to get up? Would you be able to walk and talk? Could you tell your doctor what happened to you? Amazingly, Phineas Gage did! But, could he make a complete recovery with a big hunk of his brain missing? Through the unfolding, fascinating story of Phineas Gage's life after the accident, you will see the growth of doctors' understanding of the brain and how it works. You'll love the gruesome illustrations, too!

Neat site to explore the brain!--<http://suzyred.com/2004phineasgage.html>