

Gilmour Academy Middle School

Summer Reading 2010



Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time.

-John Lubbock, renowned biologist

Like Sir John Lubbock suggests, summer is a glorious time to rest, reflect, and a time to make meaningful connections to the world around us. This summer, we are asking that you do the same. We are not assigning you a book we think is quality literature; we want you to find your own! We also want you to start thinking about what the terms “quality literature” and “good books” mean. Begin by finding your book, and then...

Assignment #1: Defend your choice. Write a justification for your book. Think: What makes your book “quality literature”? What makes it a “good book”? What makes it a book that you wish all middle schoolers would read, a book you’d be proud to share with your teacher, a book that you’d want to read again? Your response must be at least one-page, doubled-spaced, and typed.

Assignment #2: Make connections with the world around you. First, decide on the major theme in your book. Then, find a newspaper article that relates to the book’s theme. You may use current event articles, editorials, or letters-to-the-editor. Be prepared to explain the article and its connection to your book.

Assignment #3: Let the book inspire you, the poet. Write a poem *OR* find a poem inspired by the book’s major theme. The poem does not have to reflect on the book itself, but rather, on the book’s “big idea.” Your poem certainly doesn’t have to rhyme, but it can. Be prepared to share the poem you wrote or found.

FAQS

Oops. I forgot. What is a theme?

A big central idea about life, society, or human nature; sometimes a theme can be a lesson or a message

What are some popular themes in literature? I’d like to keep an eye out for one while I read.

War/violence, peace/passivity, growing up/loss of innocence, friendship, religion/God, family, love, sacrifice, overcoming adversity/struggles, honesty, revenge, fate, fall from grace, the journey, accepting differences, gratefulness

Do you have any recommendations for “good books” - for “quality literature”?

Of course we do! Here are some of our English Department’s best-loved Young Adult books:

Where the Red Fern Grows, The Uglies, The City of Ember, Nothing but the Truth, The Hobbit, The Alchemist, and Ender’s Game. We can’t wait to hear what you might add to the list!

I think I’d rather find a poem than write one. Do you have any suggestions for great poets?

We LOVE Billy Collins, Carl Sandburg, William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, Georgia Heard, Naomi Shihab Nye, Langston Hughes, James Wright, Nikki Giovanni, and Ralph Fletcher – and YOU!

So what do we have to bring on the first day of school?

Your book, your typed justification (assignment #1), your newspaper article (assignment #2), and your poem (assignment #3). We will be working with all four items during the first week of school.