2020-21 Middle School Summer Reading

For rising 5th graders

Studies have shown that reading and writing over the summer can enhance or maintain a child’s academic abilities going into the following school year. Without practice, there can actually be a lapse in some skills and information that is useful for the first month of school in the new year. So that we can begin the year with some shared conversations about our reading, the **required book to complete before the first day of school** is: *Hello Universe* by: Erin Entrada Kelly

*Hello Universe* by: Erin Entrada Kelly
Told from four intertwining points of view--two boys and two girls--the novel celebrates bravery, being different, and finding your inner bayani (hero).
This summer there will be multiple opportunities for the rising 5th grade to meet with their new teacher in a Google Meet and discuss *Hello Universe* or any other books they are reading. You can use the following discussion questions to prepare for the Google Meet.

1. Describe Virgil's personality. When he describes the rest of his family, he says he feels “like unbuttered toast standing next to them” (p. 4). What does he mean by that?
2. How does Virgil's experience in the well affect him?
3. How does Lola's arrival help Virgil? What is she like, and what's her role in the family?
4. More than once, Virgil wishes he could act as the "Alternate Virgil" (p. 39). How would he change himself if he could?
5. Discuss Chet's character and how he treats other kids. Why do you think he's so unkind?
6. Talk about the main characters' names and nicknames in the novel. Why does Valencia call herself Renee?
7. Identify the different points of view that the author uses throughout the novel. How do the points of view differ by chapter?
8. The author uses metaphors to make the story come to life. For example, Virgil's crying is compared to a faucet, starting on p. 243 and picking up again on p. 245. Why do you think the author uses this metaphor?
9. On p. 244, Virgil thinks of his family as speaking "in exclamation points." What images does that create in your mind? Find other figures of speech and discuss their impact.
10. Who is your favorite character in *Hello Universe*? Why?

**Reading Assignments:**
Students are asked to select and read chapter books of high interest.
2020-21 Middle School Summer Reading

For rising 6th graders

Read a TON over the summer! Read things you love! Read, read, and read some more! So that we can begin the year with some shared conversations about our reading, the two required books to complete before the first day of school include:

Pax by Sara Pennypacker
“Pax and Peter have been inseparable ever since Peter rescued him as a kit. But one day, the unimaginable happens: Peter's dad enlists in the military and makes him return the fox to the wild. At his grandfather's house, three hundred miles away from home, Peter knows he isn't where he should be—with Pax. He strikes out on his own despite the encroaching war, spurred by love, loyalty, and grief, to be reunited with his fox. Meanwhile Pax, steadfastly waiting for his boy, embarks on adventures and discoveries of his own.”

Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor
Set in Mississippi at the height of the Depression, this is the story of one family's struggle to maintain their integrity, pride, and independence in the face of racism and social injustice. And it is also Cassie's story—Cassie Logan, an independent girl who discovers over the course of an important year why having land of their own is so crucial to the Logan family, even as she learns to draw strength from her own sense of dignity and self-respect.

Essential Questions:
Before, during, and after reading, think about the following Essential Questions for 6th Grade Language Arts and how these questions apply to the novels.

1. Where do the main characters in these stories feel most at home? Why?
2. What different groups do the main characters in these novels belong to?
3. What brings about change in the main characters' lives?
4. What are the main characters' core values or belief systems?
5. What is power, and who has it in each of these stories?
6. What is wealth, and who has it in each of these stories?
7. Why do characters move from place to place in each of these stories?
8. Why do characters fight or struggle in each of these stories? What do they want?
9. What impact does the environment have on the characters in these stories?
10. Is being a good citizen a theme in these stories? How do you know?

We will begin the school year sharing our thoughts about the novels and writing about the essential questions above. Have a great summer!

AS ALWAYS, EXTRA INDEPENDENT READING IS ENCOURAGED! Please keep track of all books you read. In 6th LA, extra reading = extra credit.
For rising 7th graders

This summer, you will travel back to the world of ancient Greece in preparation for our study of myths and epics. To bring the Greek pantheon to life, you will complete a 2-part assignment.

PART ONE – First, read the following selections:

- *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan
- *The Odyssey*, as retold by Geraldine McCaughrean

PART TWO – Watch the movie *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* and complete the 2 movie/book guides.

The *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* DVD is $4 on Amazon or can be rented through Amazon or YouTube. After watching the movie, complete BOTH of the following charts:

- “Book and Movie Comparison/Contrast Guide”
- “Thinking Critically about the Movie Adaptation: Effects and Preferences”

AS ALWAYS, EXTRA INDEPENDENT READING IS ENCOURAGED! Please keep track of all books you read. In 7th LA, extra reading = extra credit.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Student Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Very Important</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Somewhat Important</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most Important</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thinking Critically about the Movie Adaptation: Effects and Preferences

- Understanding and enjoyment of the story
- Preference: Did this decision increase your enjoyment of the story?
- Effect of this decision on the telling of the story
- Element that was changed or kept the same
2020-21 Middle School Summer Reading

For rising 8th graders

Reading is a fundamental building block in your quest to develop a deeper and more powerful understanding of the world around you. As an added bonus, research consistently highlights the point that reading is one of the best pathways toward better writing skills. So, let's not let our break time go to waste, spend some time reading, thinking, and writing.

Assignment One:
Choose a book from the NPR or NYPL books for teens and complete the following assignment: Write a letter (at least one page) from the point of view of one of the characters to someone else in the book, written after the story has ended. Make sure to use the format of a letter and include a greeting and a signature. You can write the letter however you want, as long as it shows your understanding of the story and ideas about the character. If you’re not sure what to write about, you might want to include the following:

- your character’s hopes and fears for him/herself
- your character’s hopes, fears, or questions for the person s/he’s writing to
- questions your character still wonders about
- your character’s thoughts on what s/he learned or accomplished in the book
- his/her plans for the future

Assignment Number Two:
Choose a book of your own. Write a letter about it to your future teacher, in which you do the following things:

- Begin with a greeting.
- In no more than 5-7 sentences, summarize the main events of the book.
- Describe two main characters: what are they like? how do you know? would you be friends with them? why or why not?
- Ask two questions about the book — things you’re still wondering about; then do your best to predict the answers.
- What connections can you make between this book and your life, other books, or events in the world?
- End your letter with your final thoughts, including your opinion of the book.

Book Selection Resources
You have two choices to make for your summer reading selections.

- First, use the list* of Best Books for Teens list from National Public Radio or The New York Public Library to guide your choice. You can access the list via this link: https://apps.npr.org/best-books-2018/#/tag/young-adult
  https://www.nypl.org/books-music-dvds/recommendations/best-books/ya
- The second selection is a free choice book. You are welcome to use the NPR list as a guide if you see another book that looks interesting. But, the main guide with this second selection is that YOU choose it based on your own personal interest.
- *This list includes a wide variety of books to appeal to the interests and reading levels of many students. Parents are encouraged to review book selections with their children in order to help them make appropriate choices.