

Summer Reading And Writing for Incoming 7th Grade

This summer's reading requirement is The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, by Mark Twain. It is an American classic, which gained literary acclaim as soon as it was published in 1876. It placed Twain in the forefront of his contemporaries. It is important to note that Twain's novel contains one of the most offensive derogatory terms for African-American citizens. I believe that it is important for my students to understand the prejudice and discrimination many Americans experienced during the 18th century. The reading of this unabridged classic novel allows students to come to an understanding of just how much persecution and depersonalization African-Americans experienced everyday, even from friends, neighbors, employers, and peers.

As we move into the 7th grade curriculum, students will learn about similar abusive language and disrespectful behavior, including violent acts that were endured by indigenous peoples and immigrants. Examples include Native Americans, Irish, Italian, Polish, Chinese, Catholics, women, and children just to mention a few. I want to encourage parents to have many conversations throughout the year regarding all kinds of pain that has been experienced by many of our ancestors.

Parents, please read this novel along with your student. You may read your own copy independently or read with your child, alternating paragraphs, pages or chapters. You may also enjoy comparing the book with a video or DVD of any version you find acceptable as family "movie night." Frequently, viewing and listening to the text being read, especially when a dialect being spoken, helps to enhance children's understanding of the story. Encourage narration and dialog with your child regarding the book throughout the summer.

Please help your child establish a consistent quiet time for reading during the summer months. I have found that quiet times following lunch or before "lights out" at night are the best time for many families' schedule. Please work at finding your best time for **consistent daily reading**.

There is NO additional reading required; however, I highly recommended the following additional selections to sustain the habit of reading living books. These are just a few age- appropriate suggestions that my students and I have enjoyed in the past.

The Outsiders by S.E.Hinton
Souder - William Armstrong
Bridge to Terabithia - Katherine Paterson
The Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler by E. L. Konigsburg
Where the Red Fern Grows - Wilson Rawls
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry - Mildred D. Taylor
Going Solo - Roald Dahl (or others by this author)

A Wrinkle in Time – Madeline L'Engle (or another by this author)
War Horse – Michael Mprpurgo
Milkweed by Jerry Spinelli
The Giver – Lois Lowry
Out of the Dust – Karen Hesse
Selections of your choice by Cornelia Funk (very interesting fantasy/mystery novels)
Any Chronicles of Narnia -- C.S. Lewis (if they haven't already been read)

Writing is a skill that needs to become a habit as well as reading. In an effort to enhance the joy of reading for reading's sake, while including the opportunity of experiencing the satisfaction of writing, the writing assignment is NOT related in any way to the reading assignment.

Rather, I'd like to offer a number of independent and creative options for the writing portion of the summer assignments. **If your child has a special interest, activity, or creative idea that is not among these options, please don't hesitate e-mailing me with that idea so that I can confer with my student!**

1. Write (using a keyboard – ie. TYPE (double spaced) six - one page notes to a family members or friends describing summer activities, vacations, trips to theme parks, zoos, or museums, out of town visitors, family reunions, etc. Try to space each letter approximately two weeks apart, so that the student is writing just two notes each month: June, July, and August. Send it to the chosen person, making a copy to turn into me on the first day of school.
2. Write regularly in a journal, recording summer activities, trips to museums, theme parks, or zoos, thoughts, prayers, goals, accomplishments, etc. Each entry can be as long or short as desired, but there should be complete, grammatically correct sentences written, and the copy should cover approximately six pages when viewed together. Scrapbooking has been done in the past with great success. Typing is NOT necessary if you choose this, but your written work should contain enough text to equal 6 type-written pages double spaced.
3. Rewrite the ending of a favorite novel, story, or movie that was encountered this summer. Begin by writing a short summary about the story in case I'm unfamiliar with it, and then write the ending. This assignment should be approximately six typed and double spaced pages in length.
4. Write a play with characters and dialog from a familiar story or an original creative story that has at least five characters and a lesson or moral to be learned. Please include a short description, both physical and "character" (bully, good guy, hero, victim, morality, attitude) or role in the story (narrator, person who saves the day, etc), of each character and their relationship to each other. This assignment should be approximately six pages in length.
5. Choose a work of art seen at a museum or landmark (sculpture or architecturally dynamic structure, for example: the Guggenheim Art Museum) and put into words (write down) the ideas its observation cause you to imagine. You may want to write about building it, painting it, or living within the story that the artist painted as you determined by its form, colors, lines, textures, type of medium, and configurations. Add a picture of the artwork or structure so I can see what you have seen.

The writing assignment should be turned into me **on the first day of school in August**. I will edit and grade this assignment and it will become the very first grade of the new

school year. The student should type the project unless it's the journal writing. Handwriting should be legible and neat. Typing should be double-spaced and the font style should be easy to read in size 12 or 14; the format should have one-inch margins. **No bold print or colors please.**

In order to instill the habit of writing and to avoid a frenetic end to summer, the writing assignment should be worked on consistently throughout the summer in short periods of 20 to 30 minutes, no more than three to five times a week. Parents may offer ideas, suggestions, and help with a small amount of editing, but please allow the student to direct this project as he/she determines fit.

You may email finished portions of this assignment to me as each is completed to encourage your child to finish one idea (page, journal entry, letter) before beginning another. Emailing students' work throughout the summer will also help me to grade, offer suggestions, and learn a little bit about your child before the school year begins. Thank you in advance for considering this option.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me ASAP @ ctwist@cambridgeschool.org so I can accommodate your child's needs and interests.