

SMS 2020 REQUIRED SUMMER READING

For Students ENTERING GRADE 8



Did you know, that teachers and parents sometimes fret about the challenges of keeping up with your academics during the summer months? Since you spend more than 9 weeks away from school over the summer, you may come back in September seeming behind where you left off in June. It is important for students to keep up with your reading skills over the summer months to maintain a consistency with these skills, especially reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing.

Requiring students to do a summer reading program over the summer is a way to assure that you “exercise” your brains over the summer. In a national study, based on surveys and test results for more than 1,500 elementary and middle school students, it concluded that students who read more books over the summer, scored higher on reading comprehension tests in the fall than those who did not read over the summer. I suggest you read 20 minutes a day this summer. This does not need to be 20 minutes straight; yet it should be 20 minutes as a minimum daily total. Also, the more you read, the better and stronger your writing skills become as a result!

Therefore, for this summer, I would love to keep these reading and writing skills current for you. As the Reading/Writing teacher in the middle school, I am requiring our middle school students', to do a summer reading of novels.

*******8th graders are required to read a total of 2 books, and prepare 2 separate writing assignments for each book read this summer! ***Not during your 7th grade year!!**

I have prepared a list of novels for 8th grade that you may choose for summer reading (or choose books of your own choice). I have also developed a written assignment to be completed after you finish reading each book. These assignments are due by September 15th, Tuesday, a week after school begins this fall. The novel list and written assignments for each grade level follow.

Novels may be checked out of the public library or purchased by your family. If using the library, remember to reserve early, since you may need to place a hold, if all the copies are checked out. Many of the novels are available as "eBooks" that you may read online for free on a computer/iPad/Kindle Fire/etc.

8TH GRADE *Students entering GRADE 8 may choose two (2) books from the following to read over the summer: (or you may choose two books of your own choice) with different genres': ex. Fiction, non-fiction, mystery, biography, historical fiction, science fiction, drama, etc.**

- *Keeper (Peet)*
- *Red Scarf Girl (Jiang)*
- *The Amulet of Samarkand (Stroud)*
- *Hope Was Here (Bauer)*
- *The Roar (Clayton)*
- *Legend (Lu)*



*****HAPPY SUMMER READING SMS 8th Grade**

GRADE 8th Grade-----ASSIGNMENT CREATE A STORY MAP FOR EACH NOVEL

On a word document, or loose-leaf paper (using pen in your neatest handwriting), create a separate Story Map for each novel you read. These are due by September 15th Tuesday; a week after school begins and will be graded.

Number the following eight sections, separate them similar to paragraph-writing, and write in complete sentences. A well written story map should be about two-three pages in length. PLEASE WRITE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES TOO! Don't forget your full name/date on the top of your paper.

*****See the attached example too!**

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Title, Author, and Genre.

2. The Setting

- **Include the time and place.**
- **Is there a special geographical location or imaginative place?**

3. The Main Character

- **Besides his/her name, list traits that describe his/her personality.**
- **Does the character have weaknesses, strengths, etc.?**

4. The Plot Summary

- **Summarize the major incidents in chronological order, building up to a high point.**
- **This summary should grow in intensity to a climax where you explain how the main character eventually had to take drastic action or missed his/her opportunity to do so.**

5. Conflicts

- **What does the main character have to overcome or battle?**

6. The Solution

- **This is where you wrap up by explaining the resolution.**

- **Was there a new understanding that the main character did not have at the beginning of the novel?**

7. Primary Theme of the book

- **What message or lesson did the author wish his/her readers to learn?**

8. Rate the book using the 5 Star System(5—4—3—2—1) & explain your reasoning for your rating.

Name: Mrs. S. **Date:** 9/15/20 ******Example**

1. Title, Author, and Genre.

- **The title of my book is: Holes**
- **The author is: Louis Sachar.**
- **The genre is: Fiction**

2. The Setting

- **HOLES takes place in the present day, at a Detention Camp for young teens in trouble with the law in Texas.**
- **The actual location is at a place in the desert in Texas that used to be a lake called Camp Green Lake in a town also known as Green Lake. It is now a dry, flat wasteland that is very hot in the summer months, filled with many rattlesnakes and scorpions.**

Camp Green Lake is located on a dried-up lake in the U.S. state of Texas. The area is not green and there is no lake, besides the fact that there is such a little amount of shade (two oak trees), which are owned by the Warden. Camp Green Lake is a parched barren place with the scorching sun above them with hardly any clouds, so the sun is always shining, making the environment much hotter.

Camp Green Lake is a juvenile detention center, where inmates spend most of their time digging holes. The majority of the book takes place between the past and present. Protagonists deal with flashbacks existing from pre-dried up Green Lake to Latvia (mid-1800s) back to modern day Camp Green Lake.

The town of Green Lake was named for the eponymous lake which also made it a prosperous town, but the townsfolk's murder of Sam curses the town with an eternal drought causing the lake to dry up.

3. The Main Character

- *The main character is Stanley Yelnats, (his name is the same spelled frontwards and backwards) a young, tall, overweight and bullied teen who was innocently convicted of a crime of theft; he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.*
- *Stanley Yelnats IV (also known as "Caveman" by the rest of the campers but referred to in the book by his proper name): Stanley is a 14-year-old boy who does not have any friends from school and is often picked on by his classmates and the school bully. Stanley's family is cursed with bad luck, and although they do not have much money, they always try to remain hopeful and look on the bright side of things. Stanley shares these traits with his family and, although he does not have a lot of self-confidence, he is not easily depressed, a characteristic that helps him adjust to the horrendous conditions of Camp Green Lake. However, he has a bad habit of blaming his great- great grandfather when he gets in trouble. This habit made him impudent. As the book progresses, Stanley slowly gains the insight and fortitude to find his voice.*
- *Stanley's weaknesses are such that, as the book evolves, you see less and less of them (or at least are shown to the reader). In the beginning of the book, the author shows Stanley as being vulnerable, shy, quiet and at times withdrawn; not advocating for himself, as he lacks self-confidence due to his upbringing, his big size, and his lack of peer support.*

As the book evolves, his strengths also evolve. He begins to self-advocate for himself in the Correctional Facility, amongst his new found friends and enemies while there. Stanley also finds a new close friend, who he teaches to read.

4. The Plot/Summary

The plot explores the history of the area of a desert in Texas, and how the actions of several characters in the past have affected Stanley's life in the present. These interconnecting stories touch on themes such as racism, homelessness, illiteracy, and arranged marriage.

- *Stanley's crime was due to a pair of sneakers that accidentally fell on top of him from an overpass as he was walking home from school one day. He took it as a sign that he should have them, since his father was trying to figure out a way to recycle old sneakers, since he was an inventor. He began to run home with excitement, and a police car came up beside him asking him why he was running, which he had no good answer. The police arrested him, after making a call on the radio. The shoes actually belonged to a legend*

baseball player, Clyde Livingston, who had donated the shoes to be auctioned off to collect money for the homeless. They were actually stolen by another teen, who threw them from the overpass, landing on Stanley below.

While at the trial, which Stanley told the truth, no one believed him, and so he was sent to Camp Green Lake, to learn some discipline to improve his character, either that or go to jail.

The inmates at Camp Green Lake are forced to dig cylindrical holes five feet deep and five feet wide, which the Warden says "builds their character." They are promised the rest of their day off if they find anything that the Warden considers "interesting". Stanley finds a fossil, but Mr. Pendanski (one of the wardens) tells him that the Warden "isn't interested in fossils", leading Stanley to suspect they are looking for something in particular. During one dig, Stanley finds one of Barlow's lipstick tubes (though he does not recognize it for what it is). X-Ray, the ringleader of Tent D, asks Stanley to give him the lipstick tube so he could have the day off as he has been there the longest and deserves it. After initially refusing, Stanley obliges, and the Warden is excited by the discovery.

Meanwhile, Stanley and Zero, the smallest inmate in Tent D, who got his nickname because "he has nothing in his head", become friends. Stanley agrees to teach Zero how to read, and in return, Zero digs Stanley's hole part of the time. The camp staff discovers this, and confronts the boys. The argument culminates in Zero angrily hitting Mr. Pendanski with a shovel and running away, and the camp staff decide to erase their records of him and let him die in the desert. A few days later, Stanley follows Zero and finds him living under the remains of Sam's boat, eating very old jars of Kate's spiced peaches, which he calls "Sploosh". Stanley notices a mountain resembling a human fist giving the thumbs up sign, and recalls that Stanley Yelnats I claimed to find "refuge on God's thumb". On the mountain, Zero admits that he was the one who stole "Sweet Feet" Livingston's shoes.

Atop the mountain, Stanley discovers a field of onions that was once Sam's. The boys eat the onions and find water by digging in the ground, and Stanley sings Madame Zeroni's song to Zero, Zeroni's descendant, unknowingly breaking the curse. They return to camp and unearth the treasure. Stanley's attorney appears at the camp, explaining that Stanley is innocent due to the emergence of an alibi. The Warden tries to claim they stole the suitcase from her, but Zero reveals that the name 'Stanley Yelnats' is written on it, as the suitcase had belonged to Stanley's great-grandfather. Fearing that the warden will kill Zero if he leaves him behind, Stanley refuses to leave the camp unless Zero can come along. The attorney orders the Warden to get Zero's file, but the camp staff are naturally unable to find it, and Zero is also released.

Stanley's family open the case, discovering the jewels, deeds, stocks and promissory notes stolen from Stanley Yelnats I. Using the money raised from the bonds, Stanley's family buys a new house and Zero hires a team of investigators to find his missing mother; meanwhile, the drought at Green Lake is brought to an end by rainfall. The family's luck seems to change as if in response to Stanley's fulfillment of his ancestor's promise (a suggestion left purposely ambiguous by the narration). In a final scene, Clyde Livingston and his wife, along with the Yelnats and Zeroni families, celebrate the success of Stanley's father's antidote to foot odor, composed of preserved and fermented spiced peaches and onions and named "Sploosh" by Zero. The Warden is forced to sell Green

Lake to "a national organization dedicated to the well-being of young girls", which turns it into a Girl Scout camp.

5. Conflicts

- Stanley has to overcome the conflict and battle within him of not having a lot of self-confidence. Yet, as the book progresses, Stanley slowly gains strength in this area. He begins to acknowledge the people who threaten him, like the Warden, and while he tries not to get in trouble, he also stands up for himself, his friends and family. Stanley rebels for the rights of his friends, when he steals Mr. Sir's truck to look for his friend Zero in the dry lake bed.

6. The Solution

The resolution to the story line was that Stanley was eventually found innocent of his crime, for which he was sent to Camp Green Lake for in the first place. Yet, he came back home with more positive and strong characteristics than when he arrived.

The new understanding of Stanley's character is one of self-confidence, advocacy and the belief in him to conquer his fears about life.

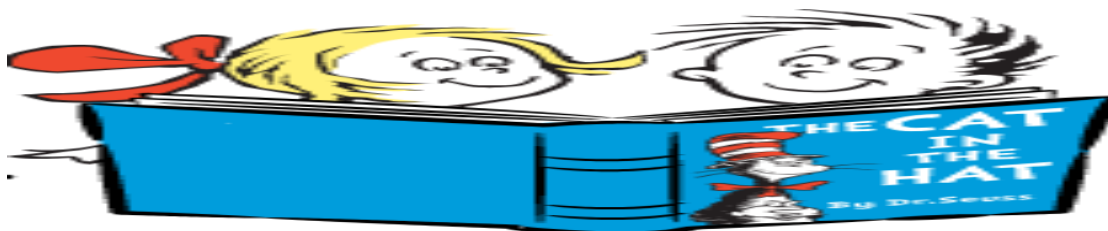
7. Primary Theme(s)

- There are many themes to HOLES, yet the ones that stand out the most for me are: ones of honesty, perseverance, racism, homelessness, illiteracy and self-discipline.
- These themes all seem to tie into together as ones that are currently happening in our culture today.

8. Rating the Story from the 5 Star System:



I would give 5 Stars to the book, Holes, simply because it held my interest throughout the book, and I could not put the book down; it was an easy, captivating read as well. I loved the story line, and the characters seemed real enough, so much so, that the story could have actually taken place somewhere, at someplace, sometime, even now.



8th Grade Summer Reading Project Rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

Scores based on a 4—3—2—1 SMS Standard Scale

****Key Ideas/Details **Literary Organization/Structure **Integration of Knowledge/Ideas**

****Production/Distribution of Writing **Comprehension/Collaboration**

****Conventions of Standard English**

1. _____ Title, Author, & Genre of the book
2. _____ Setting: Time/Place; Special Geographical location or Imaginative place mentioned?
3. _____ The Main Character: Full name; Physical/Personality Traits; strengths or weaknesses?
4. _____ Plot the Summary: Summarize the main points in chronological order, building up to a high point/climax.
5. _____ Conflicts in the story with the main character/What does he/she have to overcome or battle in the story?
6. _____ Solution: Explain the resolution of the story and how the main character changed and learned a lesson.
7. _____ Primary Theme: Why you think the author write the book, and what message he wanted to share with the readers?
8. _____ Rate your book on a 5—4—3—2—1 Star Scale and why you choose this number

_____ Complete, well written sentences

_____ No spelling or punctuation errors

_____ Apparent Preparedness

_____ Overall-Effort

_____ Complete Sections (1-8) for each Book Review

_____ All 2 or 3 Book Reviews Completed

_____ Bonus: Turned in on-time

Total score: _____/60

Standard Grade: + _____

Comments:

