



English Language Arts Department **Summer Reading for Rising 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Students**

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does this year's summer reading assignment differ, in terms of design and task? Why is the list limited?

The ELA summer reading assignment is a department-based assignment. Readers should, of course, read beyond this list in terms of their total reading experience this summer. The department does not suggest students limit their summer reading experiences within the confines of this reading assignment.

With International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program underway, the advent of PARCC assessments, and the initial implementation of a new multi-genre English Language Arts curriculum, the department called for a "common ground" from which to begin the school year. (Creating an assignment like this is actually more difficult than having students read anything and simply write a summary, for example, afterwards.) In the past, students completed a summer assignment for a book which teachers, quite possibly, may have never read (making assessment very difficult) and then simply "checking the box" indicating students have completed it. Afterwards, there was little to no segue into the actual curriculum.

In the case of this assignment, the books represent some global and key concepts, specific to the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program. Some titles range in complexity, interests, or gender-appeal. In other cases, some titles may provoke readers to read the sequel or a related read (for category 2).

Is there a rubric to accompany the tasks?

No. The outcomes for each task are meant to be formative. Student outcomes will directly inform instruction and serve as formative assessments, where teachers can assess where students "are" upon entering the grade level and course. Students will not be penalized, in terms of a grade, for not completing the tasks well. This simply indicates a need for further instruction and is sound, efficient teacher practice — targeting instruction to students' needs.

Explain the requirement for Category 1 and Category 2 books.

Students will choose one book from Category 1 and, for Category 2, either reread a book from this past school year or prior years (completely their choice), or choose a related read. All of the related reads in Category 2 relate to any/all of the books in Category 1 in some way, shape, or form. Complimentary texts/inter-related texts are an important part of building higher-order synthesis-type skills. The relationship/s between Category 1 and 2 books will be part of the discussion at the beginning of the school year. Note: Samples of tasks and possible templates for the tasks are included in the second attachment, *Sample Tasks and Templates By Grade Level*. Students are not required to use the template and are welcome to create their own entries.

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Grades 6-12