

Accelerated Summer Reading for 9th grade

Summer should not mean taking a break from learning, especially when it comes to reading. Studies show that most students experience a loss of reading skills over the summer months, but students who continue to read actually gain skills. In order to assure that North Pocono students continue to read for pleasure and enrichment, the student must choose **THREE** of the following novels:

The Hobbit

Bilbo Baggins is a well-to-do hobbit who is respected by many and never dreamed of doing anything adventurous or unexpected. However, his perfect life is suddenly disrupted as Gandalf the wizard thrusts him into the wilderness with thirteen dwarves to find a vast treasure and slay the dragon guarding it. With a surprising amount of luck, Bilbo survives trolls, giant wolves, mysterious elves, and a strange ring, before finally arriving with his companions at the evil mountain wherein lies the treasure, and the dragon! The company awakens the dragon, who flies about the land, and soon elves, men, and dwarves are all after the treasure! Will Bilbo's company be able to save the treasure from greedy hands, or be killed in the resulting Battle of Five Armies?

The Five People You Meet in Heaven

This is a story about an amusement park mechanic named Eddie who dies trying to save a little girl. The book begins by detailing Eddie's movements during his last hour alive. When Eddie dies, he finds himself in heaven, where he soon learns that he will meet five people who will explain to him the meaning of his life.

Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys

The nations of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia disappeared from maps in 1941 and did not reappear until 1990. As this is a story seldom told, the author wanted to give a voice to the millions of people who lost their lives during Stalin's cleansing of the Baltic region.

The Hate You Give

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children

A World War II veteran and Jewish refugee, Abe loves nothing better than to tell his grandson Jacob stories about his childhood. But these are no ordinary stories. They are populated with flesh-eating monsters, a hawk that smokes a pipe and children who have peculiar abilities —

they levitate, lift heavy boulders with ease or eat using a mouth in the back of their heads. One boy is invisible, and another has a swarm of bees living inside him. As he grows older, Jacob becomes skeptical of his grandfather's stories, even though Abe shows him a cigar box full of old photos to prove he is telling the truth.

Breathing Underwater

To his friends, popular and handsome sixteen-year-old Nick Andreas has led a charmed life. But the guys in Nick's anger management class know differently. So does his ex-girlfriend Caitlin. Now it looks like the only person who doesn't realize how far from perfect Nick's life has become is Nick himself.

Code Talker: The First and Only Memoir By One of the Original Navajo Code Talkers of WWII

BY CHESTER NEZ--Make sure to check the author. There is another book with a similar title.

His name wasn't Chester Nez. That was the English name he was assigned in kindergarten. And in boarding school at Fort Defiance, he was punished for speaking his native language, as the teachers sought to rid him of his culture and traditions. But discrimination didn't stop Chester from answering the call to defend his country after Pearl Harbor, for the Navajo have always been warriors, and his upbringing on a New Mexico reservation gave him the strength—both physical and mental—to excel as a marine.

During World War II, the Japanese had managed to crack every code the United States used. But when the Marines turned to its Navajo recruits to develop and implement a secret military language, they created the only unbroken code in modern warfare—and helped assure victory for the United States over Japan in the South Pacific.

Evaluation of summer reading:

The evaluation will include a written test on three novels worth 100 points and written response questions also worth 100 points. On the day of the test you will also hand in your answers to 9 response questions. These will also be worth 100 points. These assessments will be your first two grades of the quarter. The test will be given and the responses due on the first Friday of the new school year.

For each novel, there are five response questions. Choose three of the five questions and write your response. Each response question will be worth 10 points and will be graded on completeness and specific detail. In other words, you should include examples. Answers should not be vague; your responses should offer proof of reading. This is not a group assignment. Your

answers should be your own. Plagiarism will result in a zero. Plagiarism includes copying answers from another student and/or using material that is not your original words. Answers should be typed in complete sentences and adhere to the rules of grammar and usage. Your answers should be around 5 sentences. The format for your written responses is included at the end of this packet. The response questions are worth 90%. The other 10% will be based on your adherence to the MLA format. (see last page of this handout) In order to keep track and remember what you have read, you should take notes on the setting, the main characters, plot summary, and themes.

In your responses, do not use the phrases:

I think

I believe

In my opinion

I feel

Those are empty phrases. Ditch them. Your name is on the paper, so I know what you are writing contains your thoughts. You do not need to add those icky words. They take away from the strength of your sentences.

1. I believe you will be my favorite class ever.
2. You will be my favorite class ever.

The second example is much better. It sounds as if you are certain. The first one sounds wishy washy—I believe you will be my favorite, but...maybe not.

Response questions for *The Hobbit*:

1. Although *The Hobbit* has stayed alive in popular culture for many decades, it's much older than many other bestselling classics. The first edition appeared over seventy years ago. Are there elements of *The Hobbit* that seem dated, odd, or old-fashioned to you? Does *The Hobbit* read differently from more contemporary fantasy novels like the Harry Potter novels?
2. Tolkein's work has been criticized for having basically no major women characters. This is particularly true in *The Hobbit*, where the only woman mentioned by name is Bilbo's mother, Belladonna Took. How might Tolkein's tone and content change if he included a few female hobbits, elves, or dwarves in this adventure? Why do you think he didn't include them?
3. Tolkein's goblins and elves seem to embody evil and good. It would appear to be impossible for a goblin to be good and an elf, evil. Do you think genetics play that large a role over individual morality?
4. Discuss the development of Bilbo Baggins' character. What qualities are used to describe him at the beginning of the story? What qualities emerge during the course of the story?
5. Discuss the attitude toward property and material wealth that emerges in *The Hobbit*. What are the pitfalls of possessiveness and materialism?

Response questions for *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*:

1. Throughout the novel, we learn about Eddie by hearing about various birthdays. What do these birthdays teach us about him? What do they add to the story? Why do you think Albom chose birthdays for this purpose?
2. In Eddie's conversation with the Blue Man, the Blue Man says that there are "no random acts." He says that we are all interconnected. Explain.
3. Ruby tells Eddie, "Holding onto anger is a poison. It eats you from inside. We think that hating is a weapon that attacks the person that harmed us. But hatred is a curved blade. And the harm we do, we do to ourselves." Explain.
4. Why is his fifth person, Tala, so significant? What does she teach him?
5. Eddie blames the disappointments in his life on various circumstances. Who or what is responsible for his disappointments? Does he play a role?

Response questions for *Between Shades of Gray*:

1. When Jonas observes his mother smashing her beloved china and crystal before they depart their home, he asks her why she is destroying these items. She replies, "Because I love them so much." (p.18) Do you consider this an act of rebellion? In your opinion, is her reaction appropriate? In what ways is she trying to control the situation?
2. Though readers mostly learn about Kostas, Lina's father, through her shared memories, a great deal can be understood about his character. In your opinion, what kind of man is he? Is he a good father? Use textual evidences to make your case.
3. Upon arriving at the country train depot, the NKRD officers begin sorting the prisoners, and Lina asks, "Have you ever wondered what a human life is worth? That morning, my brother's was worth a pocket watch." (p.35). How does this realization change Lina? In what ways does Lina better understand her mother's actions and motivations?
4. If you disagree with a rule, law, or public policy, is it better to remain silent than speak out and risk punishment? Explain.
5. Though Lina believes that Andrius and his mother are supplying information to the NKVD officers in exchange for food and shelter, she eventually learns that the arrangement comes at a great cost to his family. How does this knowledge of the lengths his mother goes in order to keep him safe ultimately affect him? How does Lina's understanding of these sacrifices reshape her perception of him? His mother?

Response Questions for *Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children*:

1. What effect did the photographs have on how you experienced this novel? Were you disturbed, fascinated, or something else?
2. As he moves into adolescence, why does Jacob begin to doubt the veracity of his grandfather’s stories? In what way does he think they may be connected to Abe’s struggle under the Nazis?
3. What is your impression of Miss Peregrine? Give specific examples to support your answer.
4. Jacob’s grandfather plays a major role in his life up until his death. Why do you think his grandfather paid so much attention to Jacob and so little to Jacob’s father?
5. In what way can this book be seen as a classic quest story—a young hero who undertakes a difficult journey and is transformed in the process? Do you see parallels with other fantasy works involving young people?

Response Questions for *Breathing Underwater*:

1. The beginning of the book, Nick thinks of his abuse of Caitlin: It was a slap . . . One slap, when she pushed me way too far. I never beat her up, would never hurt her. Does Nick believe this? Why does he not admit the truth to himself?
2. What do you think Judge Lehman hopes to accomplish by making Nick keep a journal, detailing his relationship with Caitlin? How does keeping the journal differ from discussing the same incidents in Mario’s class?
3. Comparing himself to Tom, Nick says that Tom is a great guy. “But we’d all be great guys if we had his life.” How do a person’s circumstances affect the type of person they are?
4. Nick relates to Leo and is deeply affected by his murder-suicide. Why?
5. Does Caitlin have any qualities which make her an easy target for someone like Nick? What signs of a controlling, abusive boyfriend did he display?

Response Questions for *Code Talkers*:

1. What does this book suggest about the contributions of Native Americans to the U.S.'s recent history?
2. What are some of the conflicts between Navajo and Anglo culture that the book depicts?
3. How was World War II not only a battle over territory, but also a battle over communication?
4. Could the Americans have won the war against the Japanese in the Pacific without the code talkers?
5. In what ways does the war continue for Chester after his return to America from the Pacific?

Response Questions to *The Hate You Give*:

1. As Starr and Khalil listen to Tupac, Khalil explains what Tupac said “Thug Life” meant. Discuss the meaning of the term “Thug Life” as an acronym and why the author might have chosen part of this as the title of the book. In what ways do you see this in society today? (The acronym contains profanity, so you don’t need to include that specific word in your explanation).
2. Chapter 2 begins with Starr flashing back to two talks her parents had with her when she was young. One was about sex (“the usual birds and bees”). The second was about what precautions to take when encountering a police officer (Chapter 2). Have you had a similar conversation about what to do when stopped by the police? Why or why not?
3. At the police station after Starr details the events leading up to the shooting, the detective shifts her focus to Khalil’s past. Why do you think the detective did this? Discuss the way that Khalil is portrayed by the media.
4. Once news of Khalil’s shooting spreads across the neighborhood, unrest arises: “Sirens wail outside. The news shows three patrol cars that have been set ablaze at the police precinct...A gas station near the freeway gets looted...My neighborhood is a war zone” (Chapter 9). Respond to this development and describe some parallels to current events.
5. Starr pledges to “never be quiet” (Chapter 26). After reading this book, how can you use your voice to promote and advance social justice? Reflect on how you and your community discuss and address inequality.

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English 9

5 September 2014

Summer Reading Responses

1. You do not have to type the questions, just your responses. Starting from your name to the end of your responses, the entire paper should be double-spaced. Have a great summer and I am looking forward to working with all of you next year. You will love the high school and all of its opportunities.

2. Do not add extra space in between responses—just double space.