



7th Grade Summer Reading

Incoming 7th Graders are required to read three different books this summer. Both ELA and Social Studies require specific books, and have writing assignments. The third book must be chosen from the list of options below, and does not have any written assignments to be completed over the summer. However, students will be expected to do some writing on this book when they return in the fall. Make sure to complete the ELA and Social Studies assignments on separate pieces of paper so that they can be handed to different teachers on the first day of school. Happy reading!

Part 1 - ELA

The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan. Mythological monsters and the gods of Mount Olympus seem to be walking out of the pages of twelve-year-old Percy Jackson's textbooks and into his life. And worse, he's angered a few of them. Zeus's master lightning bolt has been stolen, and Percy is the prime suspect. Now, he and his friends have just ten days to find and return Zeus's stolen property and bring peace to a warring Mount Olympus.

ELA Assignment: Students will choose to answer five (5) of the following questions in well-developed paragraphs (using evidence from the text!) for The Lightning Thief:

1. Pick one of the monsters from The Lightning Thief that Percy and his friends encounter, and research this monster online or at the library. How does Rick Riordan (the author) make this monster appear similar or different from the original version in Greek mythology?
2. The god, Ares, says he loves America. He calls it "the best place since Sparta." What does he mean? Do you agree with his assessment of America? Why? Why not?
3. Percy says, "Mr. Brunner expected me to be as good as everybody else, despite the fact I had dyslexia and I had never made above a C- in my life. No—he didn't expect me to be as good. He expected me to be better." Based on this and AT LEAST ONE OTHER PIECE OF EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT, what do you think of Mr. Brunner as a teacher?
4. Percy's fight with Echidna and the Chimera is a low point for his morale. He begins to doubt that he is capable of being a hero. Why does he feel this way, and do you think his doubts are reasonable? What does this fight scene reveal about Percy's character?



5. How does the last line of the prophecy-*you shall fail to save what matters most in the end*-come true? What do you think of this ending? Did Percy make the right choice?
6. How are the gods different from or similar to humans? How is the immortal world different from or similar to the mortal world?
7. How is Percy similar to and/or different from other heroic characters in other fiction stories that you have read? How is this story similar to and/or different from other hero stories?
8. Medusa tempts Percy to stay with her as a statue. She warns him that he is simply a pawn of the Gods. Does Percy seem like a pawn? Why or why not? If you were given Percy's quest, would you undertake it or would you rebel?

Part 2 – Social Studies

Students should read [*Chains*](#) by Laurie Halse Anderson. If an entire nation could seek its freedom, why not a girl? As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight... for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom. **[Copies are available at the George Bruce Library on West 125th Street near between Amsterdam and Broadway]**

Social Studies Assignment: Students will choose to answer three (3) of the following questions in well-developed paragraphs (using evidence from the text!) for *Chains*. The essential questions are:

1. How were the lives of enslaved people in the American colonies in the 1700s depicted in this book? (Give full sentence descriptions using evidence from the text.)
2. How were the lives of servants different from the lives of enslaved people? (Give examples using evidence from the text in full sentences.)
3. How did Miss Mary Finch's view of slavery differ from that of most slave owners? (Provide examples using evidence from the text in full sentences.)
4. Why does Mr. Robert accuse Isabel of lying when she tells him that she read Miss Mary's will? (Explain the context of this accusation.)



5. Why does Pastor Weeks believe that teaching enslaved people to read only “leads to trouble?” (Use examples from the text to analyze this position.) Do you agree or disagree with the Pastor’s position? Why or why not? [This has extra follow-up questions to give room for a well-developed paragraph.]
6. The ideas of “freedom” and “liberty” were used a lot during the American Revolution. How is Mr. Lockton’s view of these ideas as a Loyalist differ from the Patriots? How would these ideas look to Isabel, who has lived her entire life in bondage? (Provide examples using evidence from the text in full sentences.)
7. The bookseller gives Isabel a copy of *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine. He advises her that the words are dangerous and that she should commit them to memory. When does she understand Paine’s words? How does the book give her courage? (Provide examples using evidence from the text in full sentences.)

Going beyond

For extra credit, students should make a detailed map of the world that includes:

- locations mentioned in the book
- labeled land masses
- labeled bodies of water
- a compass rose
- a map key

Part 3 – Student Choice

(Students must read at least one of the following books)

Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson. Cole Matthews has had a troubled adolescence. After severely beating a 9th grade classmate, he receives a harsh sentence. Given a choice between prison and Native American Circle Justice, Cole chooses Circle Justice: He’ll spend one year in complete isolation on a remote Alaskan island. In the first days of his banishment, Cole is mauled by a mysterious white bear and nearly dies. Now there’s no one left to save Cole, but Cole himself.

Revenge of the Whale by Nathaniel Philbrick. He tells the story of the Nantucket whaleship Essex, which sank in the Pacific in November 1820, after being deliberately rammed twice by an apparently enraged sperm whale. Three months later, five emaciated men were rescued from two small boats filled with the bones of their unlucky companions.

Sea of Trolls by Nancy Farmer. Jack has never been much good at anything until the Bard of his medieval village makes him an apprentice. Then, just as Jack is learning to tap into and control his power, he is kidnapped, along with his little sister, Lucy, and taken to the court of King Ivar the



Boneless and his half troll queen Frith. When one of Jack's amateur spells causes the evil queen's beautiful hair to fall out, he is forced to undertake a dangerous quest across the Sea of Trolls to make things right, or suffer the consequences--the sacrifice of his beloved sister to Frith's patron goddess, Freya. (Based on Norse Mythology).

Golden Ratio: The Story of PHI, the World's Most Astonishing Number by Mario Livio. Throughout history, thinkers from mathematicians to theologians have pondered the mysterious relationship between numbers and the nature of reality. In this fascinating book, Mario Livio tells the tale of a number at the heart of that mystery: *phi*, or 1.6180339887... This curious mathematical relationship, widely known as "The Golden Ratio," was discovered by Euclid more than two thousand years ago.

City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau. Jeanne DuPrau's instant classic tells the story of the great, underground city of Ember, designed as a last refuge for the human race. But when the storerooms run out of food and the lights begin to fail, it's up to two teens, Lina and Doon, to decipher the fragments of an ancient parchment and find a way out of Ember.

The Uglies by Scott Westerfield. Tally Youngblood lives in a futuristic society that acculturates its citizens to believe that they are ugly until age 16 when they'll undergo an operation that will change them into pleasure-seeking "pretties." Anticipating this happy transformation, Tally meets Shay, another female ugly, who shares her enjoyment of hoverboarding and risky pranks. But Shay also disdains the false values and programmed conformity of the society and urges Tally to run away with her.

The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation by Hennessey and McConnell. Our leaders swear to uphold it, our military to defend it. It is the blueprint for the shape and function of government itself and what defines Americans as Americans. But how many of us truly know our Constitution?

Eragon by Christopher Paolini. "One world... One dragon... A world of adventure." When Eragon finds a polished blue stone in the forest, he thinks it is the lucky discovery of a poor farm boy; perhaps it will buy his family meat for the winter. But when the stone brings a dragon hatchling, Eragon soon realizes he has stumbled upon a legacy nearly as old as the Empire itself. Overnight his simple life is shattered, and he is thrust into a perilous new world of destiny, magic, and power. Can Eragon take up the mantle of the legendary Dragon Riders? The fate of the Empire may rest in his hands...



Making Things Move: DIY Mechanisms for Inventors, Hobbyists, and Artists by Dustyn Roberts. In *Making Things Move*, you'll learn how to build moving mechanisms through non-technical explanations, examples, and do-it-yourself projects--from art installations to toys to labor-saving devices. The projects include a drawing machine, a mini wind turbine, a mousetrap powered car, and more, but the applications of the examples are limited only by your imagination. A breadth of topics is covered ranging from how to attach couplers and shafts to a motor, to converting between rotary and linear motion.