

CCA Summer Reading

Mrs. Hanley – Grades 6, 7, & 8

Dear Student,

Attached, you will find the summer 2011 reading list for your class. Your list consists of 10 or more carefully selected books. Each book is accompanied by a brief review or description that should provide you with enough information about the plot to determine whether or not it may be of interest to you. Your summer assignment is as follows:

The Reading –

1. Select and read any two books (minimum) from the list.
2. Decide which book you found most interesting (and best understood).
3. Choose one of the book reporting written activities on the attached sheet (the circled numbers are the ones available for you to choose from).
4. Complete the activity *with excellence*.

The Book Report Activity –

1. Regardless of the activity you choose, each activity must be *typed, double spaced, and written in size 12 font*.
2. The activity should reflect careful thought and time spent. By its quality and creativity, it should show that you took the assignment seriously and gave your best effort.
3. Length: there is no set length. Follow the guidelines given in the activity description, and keep in mind that something short and hastily written will receive the grade it deserves.

Final Note –

This may not be the type of reading you're used to, or would necessarily choose for yourself, but pray that God would grant you an open mind as you tackle these books. They're called classics for a reason, and each has something to teach us about human nature and the nature of God. Don't feel limited to the required two – if you have time and the desire, read as many books as you possibly can! Extra reading expands your vocabulary, which leads to better thinking and writing skills. Those skills, in turn, lead to greater opportunities both within school and beyond!

6th Grade Summer Reading List

1. **The Little Prince** – Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Book description:

An aviator whose plane is forced down in the Sahara Desert encounters a little man from a small planet who describes his adventures in the universe seeking the secret of what is really important in life.

2. **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass**

Book Description:

A little girl falls down a rabbit hole and discovers a world of nonsensical and amusing characters.

3. **Where the Red Fern Grows** – Wilson Rawls

Amazon.com review:

Author Wilson Rawls spent his boyhood much like the character of this book, Billy Colman, roaming the Ozarks of northeastern Oklahoma with his bluetick hound. A straightforward, shoot-from-the-hip storyteller with a searingly honest voice, Rawls is well-loved for this powerful 1961 classic and the award-winning novel *Summer of the Monkeys*. In *Where the Red Fern Grows*, Billy and his precious coonhound pups romp relentlessly through the Ozarks, trying to "tree" the elusive raccoon. In time, the inseparable trio wins the coveted gold cup in the annual coon-hunt contest, captures the wily ghost coon, and bravely fights with a mountain lion. When the victory over the mountain lion turns to tragedy, Billy grieves, but learns the beautiful old Native American legend of the sacred red fern that grows over the graves of his dogs. This unforgettable classic belongs on every child's bookshelf. (*Ages 9 and up*)

4. **Island of the Blue Dolphins** – Scott O'Dell

Amazon.com review:

Scott O'Dell won the Newbery Medal for *Island of the Blue Dolphins* in 1961, and in 1976 the Children's Literature Association named this riveting story one of the 10 best American children's books of the past 200 years. O'Dell was inspired by the real-life story of a 12-year-old American Indian girl, Karana. The author based his book on the life of this remarkable young woman who, during the evacuation of Ghalas-at (an island off the coast of California), jumped ship to stay with her young brother who had been abandoned on the island. He died shortly thereafter, and Karana fended for herself on the island for 18 years. O'Dell tells the miraculous story of how Karana forages on land and in the ocean, clothes herself (in a green-cormorant skirt and an otter cape on special occasions), and secures shelter. Perhaps even more startlingly, she finds strength and serenity living alone on the island.

5. **Old Yeller** – Fred Gipson

Book Description:

At first, Travis couldn't stand the sight of Old Yeller. The stray dog was ugly, and a thieving rascal, too. But he sure was clever, and a smart dog could be a big help on the wild Texas frontier, especially with Papa away on a long cattle drive up to Abilene. Strong and courageous, Old Yeller proved that he could protect Travis's family from any sort of danger. But can Travis do the same for Old Yeller?

6. **Tuck Everlasting** – Natalie Babbit

Book Description:

When ten-year-old Winnie Foster stumbles upon the Tuck family's disturbing secret, she is forced to come to terms with her conflicting emotions. She feels drawn to the loving, gentle and rather eccentric Tucks, but what they tell her is too incredible to be believed. Doomed to? or blessed with? eternal life after drinking from a magic spring, the Tuck family tries to make Winnie understand that the terrible magic of the forest spring can never be revealed. The consequences to the world could prove to be disastrous!

7. **My Side of the Mountain** – Jean Craighead George

Amazon.com review:

Every kid thinks about running away at one point or another; few get farther than the end of the block. Young Sam Gibley gets to the end of the block and keeps going--all the way to the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York. There he sets up house in a huge hollowed-out tree, with a falcon and a weasel for companions and his wits as his tool for survival. In a spellbinding, touching, funny account, Sam learns to live off the land, and grows up a little in the process. Blizzards, hunters, loneliness, and fear all battle to drive Sam back to city life. But his desire for freedom, independence, and adventure is stronger. No reader will be immune to the compulsion to go right out and start whittling fishhooks and befriending raccoons.

8. **Bridge to Terabithia** – Katherine Paterson

Amazon.com review:

The story starts out simply enough: Jess Aarons wants to be the fastest boy in the fifth grade--he wants it so bad he can taste it. He's been practicing all summer, running in the fields around his farmhouse until he collapses in a sweat. Then a tomboy named Leslie Burke moves into the farmhouse next door and changes his life forever. Not only does Leslie not look or act like any girls Jess knows, but she also turns out to be the fastest runner in the fifth grade. After getting over the shock and humiliation of being beaten by a girl, Jess begins to think Leslie might be okay. Despite their superficial differences, it's clear that Jess and Leslie are soul mates. The two create a secret kingdom in the woods named Terabithia, where the only way to get into the castle is by swinging out over a gully on an enchanted rope. Here they reign as king and queen, fighting off imaginary giants and the walking dead, sharing stories and dreams, and plotting against the schoolmates who tease them. Jess and Leslie find solace in the sanctuary of Terabithia until a tragedy strikes and the two are separated forever. In a style that is both plain and powerful, Katherine Paterson's characters will stir your heart and put a lump in your throat.

9. **Little Women** – Louisa May Alcott

From the Publisher:

Little Women is one of the best-loved books of all time. Lovely Meg, talented Jo, frail Beth, spoiled Amy: these are hard lessons of poverty and of growing up in New England during the Civil War. Through their dreams, plays, pranks, letters, illnesses, and courtships, women of all ages have become a part of this remarkable family and have felt the deep sadness when Meg leaves the circle of sisters to be married at the end of Part I. Part II, chronicles Meg's joys and mishaps as a young wife and mother,

Jo's struggle to become a writer, Beth's tragedy, and Amy's artistic pursuits and unexpected romance. Based on Louise May Alcott's childhood, this lively portrait of nineteenth-century family life possesses a lasting vitality that has endeared it to generations of readers.

10. **Girls Think of Everything: Stories of Ingenious Inventions by Women** – Catherine Thimmesh

From School Library Journal:

Grade 5-8-An outstanding collective biography of women and girls who changed the world with their inventions. Thimmesh surveys unique and creative ideas that were both borne of necessity or were simply a product of ingenuity and hard work. Included are Bette Nesmith Graham, who invented Liquid Paper, known more commonly as "white-out," and Ann Moore, who emulated the way African mothers carried their babies to create the Snuggly. While working for NASA, Jeanne Lee Crews invented the "space bumper" that protects spacecraft and astronauts. The last few individuals highlighted utilized their creativity at a fairly young age. Becky Schroeder was 10 when she invented Glo-sheet paper, which enables people to write in the dark. She became the youngest female to receive a U.S. patent. The book also encourages young women to start inventing themselves and offers a list of organizations with postal and Internet addresses to help them get started. Colorful collage artwork shows the women and their creations and adds vibrancy and lightness to the text.

**Book Reporting:
Written Activities** * Options are marked by grade

These alternative assignments to the standard "book report" can be used for reporting on fiction.

1. Write a skit or short play that utilizes the same main characters as the story. If you wish, you may add a new character to give freshness to the mix, Continue the plot of the original story; or invent a new conflict and resolution.
2. On a 3-inch X 5-inch note card, write a telegram about the book to send to a friend. Include specific things about the characters, story, and setting. Limit the telegram to fifty words by leaving out *ands* and similar, small words so you can say more in a short space.
- * 6,7,8,9 3. Write a diary as if you were one of the main characters in the book. Tell not only what is happening to you and others, but how you feel about what is taking place. Make a minimum of ten sequential entries of at least five sentences each.
- * 6,7,8,9 4. Write a letter to the-author of the book. Emphasize the parts of the book you liked best, one part you would change (telling specifically how), and name your favorite character. Tell exactly why you found the character likable and/or, believable.
- * 8,9,10 5. Pretend you are a book critic and write a book review for a newspaper. Tell the name of the book, its author, something about the main characters, plot, setting, and conflict. Do not reveal the ending, but evaluate the book and the author's writing ability.
6. Rewrite the ending of the story. Be sure it is plausible and different from the one the author uses. Your ending should begin at the climax and take the main characters through to a different resolution or solution to their basic problem.
- * 6,7,8,9 7. Choose a main character from the book. Write a letter to him or her,

giving advice on what he or she should do to solve the conflicts that have been presented in the book. Be sure your advice is different from the way the author resolves the problems.

8. Write a one-page publicity article promoting the book. Be specific, but don't tell the story or the ending. Remember, you are trying to interest someone in reading the book, not summarizing it. Reading book jackets should help you get ideas.
9. Write a one-page biography of a character from the story. Use any and all information given by the author throughout the book. Write the facts about the character in chronological order, even if they weren't presented that way during the story.
- *9, 10 10. Pretend you are a news reporter assigned to the obituary page. Write brief obituaries about two characters from the book. Give pertinent information about their lives, showing readers what you have learned about them and the legacies they leave.
- * 8,9,10 11. If the book you read was adapted for television or the movies, write two long paragraphs (one page) comparing and contrasting the book and the television or movie version. In the first paragraph, tell the ways the versions were similar. In the second, tell the ways in which they differed.
- * 8,9,10 12. In what period of history was the story set? Go to the library and research the era. Add what you learned about the customs, dress, language, and so forth from the book to what you learn from your research. Summarize on one full page the historical period.
13. Search the book for similes, metaphors, or exceptional images the author used. Write them down exactly as stated. Label each with a S, M, or I to show that you know one from the other. Be sure to fill one complete page.
- * 6 14. Write a one-page summary of the story. Be sure to include the main characters, setting, plot, climax, and resolution, but be brief and to the point. Put the title and author's name at the top of the page, and put your name at the bottom.
15. Take one interesting incident from the story. Use it as a springboard to write a short story for a young person of elementary school age. Limit yourself to two or three pages.
16. Write one page telling why you would or would not like the main character for a friend.
17. Write one page about one of the characters. In the first paragraph, tell how the character *is* like you. In the second, tell how the character differs from you.
- * 6,7 18. Compare two books you have recently read. Tell all the ways they are alike. Be sure to list the complete titles and authors.
- * 6,7 19. Contrast two books you have recently read. Tell all the ways they are different. Be sure to list the complete titles and authors.
20. Outline the book, using main headings such as SETTING, CHARACTERS, PLOT, INCIDENTS, and ENDING for your Roman numeral divisions.
21. Make up a shape poem relating to the book.
22. If you've read a myth, fable, or legend, make up one of your own and tell or read it to the class.

