Attention: Parents and Students!


WHAT: The information attached outlines the choices and assignments we have given to our students for the 2018 James S. Rickards School-Wide Summer Reading Program. While specific courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) may have alternate or additional summer assignments that will need to be completed before the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, we want to develop a program that encourages a culture of reading and an expectation of academic dedication for all of our students. Therefore, we are asking you to read the attached information and participate in our summer reading activity. The assignment composed for this year focuses on having students answer reflective questions about their chosen text and provide evidence for the inferences they make in their reflection.

WHEN: While the expectation is that students will write original answers to these questions and submit them as a course requirement by the end of the first week of school following our return, we also want to encourage parents and groups of students to use them to discuss their readings with each other so that we can all share in the experience of these texts. Activities centered upon these questions will take place within the first few weeks of Language Arts instruction in the fall as well.

CONTACT INFO: If you have any questions regarding our JSRHS Summer Reading Program, please feel free to contact Mr. Fiallos, JSRHS ELA Department Chair (fiallosj@leonschools.net).

JSRHS Summer Reading Titles and Sneak Previews, 2018


One lie told by two little girls who were almost certain that their neighbor had to be the Ohio River Monster. That’s all it took to convict Wyatt Stokes. Tessa and Callie have gone their separate ways and never talked about the trial. Now Tessa has to return to her hometown and another body is found that bears the mark of the serial killer they thought was behind bars. What if they were wrong? What if the killer is still at large? What if things aren’t always what they seem? Don’t read this one before bed.


Jessie’s mom died two years ago, and now her father has eloped with a woman he met online. He is moving Jessie across the country to LA where the new stepmom lives. She also gets a new stuck-up stepbrother who has zero interest in helping Jessie adjust to life in her new rich-kid school. Yay. Things seem to be falling in place for Jessie’s worst year yet when she gets an email from “Somebody/Nobody” offering to help her navigate life in LA/her new school. Is this a joke, or an actual offer of help? S/N seems to be helpful, and Jessie starts to wonder what it would be like to meet this mystery person.


On the island of Fennbirn, every generation brings with it a set of female triplets, all equal heirs to the throne, and each with her own magical abilities. Mirabella can spark flames or conjure up storms. Katherine can ingest poison without fear of death. Arsinoe has control over all natural elements like plants and animals. The three sisters must fight to prove who is most worthy of being crowned queen, so who is the strongest and who will perish and at the hands of her own sister?
Libby Strout lost her mother unexpectedly when she was ten years old. She ate her grief away, becoming morbidly obese and a social media spectacle. Jack Masselin is a popular guy, with lots of cool friends, but he’s working hard to hide a secret: he can’t recognize any of them from day to day as the result of a neurological condition that causes facial blindness. Jack and Libby’s worlds intersect after a bullying incident, and their resulting relationship ultimately enriches both their lives in surprising and wonderful ways.


When Victor Benucci’s father dies, Victor receives an urn with his father’s ashes and a list in it. He meets a group of kids who become the Kids of Appetite (KoA) and help Vic go to all the places on his father’s list and spread the ashes. One of the KoA, Madeline (Mad) has a troubled past. Mad’s uncle is murdered and she and Vic are picked up by the police. Kids of Appetite is the story that takes place between the death of Vic’s father and the murder of Mad’s uncle. Read KoA and meet all of the Kids of Appetite.


Graham and his best friend, Roxy, are uber geeks. They’ve been best friends since they were eight, bonding over Harry Potter. They’ve joined a lot more fandoms since then, but their true love is for the Chronicles of Althena, The Greatest Comic Ever- the one that inspired them to make their own comics. They’ve never gotten to meet the creator, because he’s a J.D. Salinger-level recluse. But they get a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to score tickets, and it will provide the most perfectly epic setting for Graham to confess his true feelings to Roxy…if he can pull it off. If you’ve ever slaved for hours on the perfect cosplay or cried too much over fictional characters, this book is for you!


Sixteen-year-old Jesse's brother died on 9/11 in the Towers. She was only two and it seems as though all of the memories of Travis died when he did. Surely, dying isn't the most important thing about his life. Sixteen-year-old Alia is Muslim and her parents just grounded her. She is headed to her dad's office on September 11, 2001 to discuss the situation, even if it means she'll be late to school. The background story is on the news. The real story is Jesse finally learning what happened there and how that impacts her life now.


Scythe is a science fiction book set in the future where the human population is immortal. The only way to die is to be randomly killed or gleaned by professional reapers known as “scythes.” Citra and Rowan are two teenagers who have been selected to apprentice as scythes. They must learn the art of killing and understand the need. But, in a twist of fate, only one will be chosen to become a scythe and the winner will have to glean the loser.


The deep and enduring friendship between Vincent and Theo Van Gogh shaped both brothers' lives. Confidant, champion, sympathizer, friend—Theo supported Vincent as he struggled to find his path in life. They shared everything, swapping stories of lovers and friends, successes and disappointments, dreams and ambitions. Meticulously researched, drawing on the 658 letters Vincent wrote to Theo during his lifetime, Deborah Heiligman weaves a tale of two lives intertwined and the extraordinary love of the Van Gogh brothers.
At sixteen, Gwendolyn Oxenham was the youngest Division I athlete in NCAA history, a starter and leading goal-scorer for Duke. At twenty, she graduated, the women’s professional soccer league folded, and her career was over. In Finding the Game, Oxenham, along with her boyfriend and two friends, chases the part of the game that outlasts a career. They bribe their way into a Bolivian prison, bet shillings on a game with moonshine brewers in Kenya, play with women in hijab on a court in Tehran—and discover what the world looks like when you wander down side streets, holding on to a ball.

An entertaining, heartfelt look at the soul of a sport and a thrilling travel narrative, this book is proof that on the field and in life, some things need no translation.

James S. Rickards High School Summer Reading Assignment 2018

After completing your reading of ONE of the titles above, please complete both parts of the assignment below. Note that both part one and part two of the assignment will be due at the end of the first week of the 2018-2019 school year.

**Assignment Part I: Written Response**

Directions: After reading the summer reading novel you chose from the school list, complete the following questions. Your responses may be typed or neatly hand-written on a separate sheet of paper.

1. List the title and author of your book.

2. Write a concise, objective summary of your book. This should be no longer than 3-5 sentences.

3. What is the central conflict or societal issue presented in this book? How does it change or develop over the course of the novel?

4. Part A: What is a statement about life or the world with which the author of this book would agree? Your answer should be one complete sentence.

5. Part B: Consider the statement you constructed in part A (question #4). Cite 4-5 quotations from the book that provide textual evidence of the accuracy of the statement you constructed. Be sure to cite your quotations using the following example: “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view…” (pg. 83)

6. Explain an event or idea from your own life or current events that relates to a theme or idea that is prominent in this book.

**General Reminders and Expectations for Writing Short Responses**

- The response should answer ALL portions of the question.
- The response should be accurate in its answer to all portions of the question.
- The response should be written with the appropriate level of thought and depth demanded by the task.
- When required, the response provides text evidence for support.
- The response is free from errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage.
- The response is written in complete sentences.

**Assignment Part II: Creative Response**

Directions: Using your responses to several of the questions above, construct either a brochure or poster to promote your book. Your promotional poster or brochure should be neat, colorful, and contain a version of your book summary (question #2), 2-3 quotations from the book (question 5), a brief quote or statement from you, the reader, giving your opinion of the book (2-3 sentences maximum), and artwork that is relevant to the major themes or ideas of the text.

**General Reminders and Expectations for Crafting Creative Responses**

- The creative response should address all components required by the task directions.
- The creative response should accurately reflect the required information.
- The creative response should be neat and attractive.
- The creative response is free from errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage.