Summer Reading Assignment

English 9 • Hopkins North

Name ____________________________________________________________

Summer provides many opportunities for students and their families to enjoy unforgettable books together. All students going into grade 9 are expected to read SIX books. Write the titles of the books you read this summer in the table below. Then choose ONE of those six books and complete the rest of the assignment.

Note: This assignment is VERY similar to assignments you will be doing in English 9, so it will help you get used to the kind of thinking we will ask you to do. Also, you will be given the option to use your work here for one of your independent reading assignments in class. (If you choose not to use it, you will be required to read a different book, so this is a GREAT deal for you!)

We look forward to meeting you!
Ms. Brueske, Mr. Ilten, Ms. Matts, and Ms. Stedman

The six books I read this summer were the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>My Star Rating (1-5)</th>
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Part One: The Basics About The Book You Chose to Write About

Short and Sweet Summary (write a sentence for each of the boxes below):

<table>
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<th>Someone… (main character/protagonist)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wanted… (goal/desire)</td>
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<tr>
<td>But… (problem/complication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So… (how things turned out)</td>
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How did you decide to read this book? ____________________________________________________________
Part Two: Literary Analysis (the Author’s "So What?")

A book’s THEME is an important, deep idea that the author wants his or her readers to understand about life. It’s more than just a topic, like “family.” It tells you something ABOUT the topic of family. Here are three possible THEMES about the TOPIC of family:

- Family isn’t always blood. It’s the people who truly know you and accept you for who you are.
- If you stay grounded in your family through hard times in your life, you will eventually find your way home.
- Even though you love your family members, you may struggle to like them sometimes.

Think of it this way: The topic is FAMILY. SO WHAT? What’s so important about family? What deeper idea do we need to understand about it?

What is a THEME you got out of this book? Write it in one sentence below, just like the examples above.

Now, look for a brief passage in your book that you think shows this theme. Copy it word-for-word below.

“__________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

” (page ____).

What is happening in the story at this point? (Catch us up!)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How does this passage show the theme?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Why is this theme an important idea for us to consider as human beings?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Draw or find a picture of something that SYMBOLIZES this theme. (Remember, a SYMBOL is an ordinary object that represents a big idea.) Then explain how this picture symbolizes the theme in your book. An example is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><img src="image" alt="Lighthouse in a Storm" /></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The picture I chose to represent the theme of staying grounded in one's family to find the way home shows a ship rowing its way toward a lighthouse in the midst of a bad storm. The boat represents a person, riding the stormy waves of a bad situation in life, and the lighthouse represents the person's family, strong and sturdy and shining a strong beam of light for the person to keep his/her eyes on. Just as you feel safe and comforted by your family after a stressful situation, the lighthouse offers the promise of rest and safety for those on the boat.</td>
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**Part Three: Reader Response: Your "So What?" Truth**

What was it that made you like/love/hate/be indifferent to the book?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

What connections did you make to your life or other things you know about?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your hard work! See you soon!

The following is an example of this assignment written about a book that most of you should know—*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred Taylor.
Book: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred Taylor

**Part One: The Basics**

**Short and Sweet Summary:** The Logans (an African American family living in the Jim Crow South of Mississippi during the Great Depression) wanted to organize a boycott of a white-owned store to protest unfair labor practices and increasing violence and racist attitudes. This angered some of the whites, who retaliated with even more violence. In order to save the life of a young boy framed for murder, David Logan set his own cotton on fire during a thunderstorm. Everyone in the community believed the fire was accidentally set by lightning and united to put it out.

**Why I Chose to Read the Book:** I decided to read *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* because it was a part of the eighth grade curriculum. I've read it over and over again, but every time through, I see something new or appreciate Taylor's writing a little bit more.

**What I Know About the Author:** In the author's note at the beginning of the book, Taylor describes her father as a great storyteller and a great man. She writes, "He taught me of myself; of life. He taught me of hopes and dreams. And he taught me the love of words. Without his teachings, without his words, my words would not have been." She goes on to say that even though her father had died, the best of him lived on in the people who knew and loved him as well as in the pages of her book. The love in her words made me look forward to reading the story.

**Part Two: The Author's "So What?"**

**A Theme I Got Out of This Book:** The choices we make may come with consequences, but sometimes we have to take calculated risks to accomplish our goals.

**A Brief Passage in This Book That Shows This Theme:** "As we came to the bridge, we could see the Wallaces...touch their hats respectfully, then immediately freeze as they saw who we were. Uncle Hammer, straight-faced and totally calm, touched the brim of his own hat in polite response and without a backward glance sped away, leaving the Wallaces gaping silently after us" (139).

**What is Happening in the Story at This Point:** Hammer, Cassie's uncle, returns to Mississippi from Chicago, where he has earned enough money at a good job to buy fancy clothes and a car that is a newer model Packard than Mr. Granger's (one of the white landowners). Hammer takes his family for a ride in the Packard and comes to the bridge, which is only wide enough for one vehicle. The Wallaces—one of the white families who own a store in town—are on the other side, and since they think that Mr. Granger is approaching, they stop and let the Logans pass. Hammer didn't make a mistake; he made an informed decision. Hammer knows that having nice possessions puts him at the same level as the whites, and he knows that they won't like it. He also knows that leading the Wallaces to believe he is a powerful white landowner will make them angry, but he doesn't care. In fact, he takes pleasure in stirring things up.
How This Passage Shows the Theme: There is a consequence to Hammer’s choice: Mama tells Hammer that he shouldn’t have done what he did because eventually they would have to "pay" for his actions—maybe after he has left town and escaped the racism that the rest of his family has to live with every day. Hammer probably didn’t think about this in the moment he made the decision. He wanted justice for hurts of the past and wanted to prove his point that he was just as good and deserving as the whites. However, in the world of Jim Crow, change was not going to come about easily and without consequences.

Why This Theme is an Important Idea for Us to Consider as Human Beings: The idea that decisions come with consequences is an important truth to examine because life is full of choices, and we have to decide what we can live with and what we can't when it comes to the consequences that follow.

A Picture of Something That SYMBOLIZES This Theme: The symbol I chose to represent this theme is the "slippery when wet" sign. When drivers see this sign along the road, they are alerted to the fact that there is potential for danger, depending on conditions and how they choose to drive. Drivers need to assess the current conditions and make a choice about his or her driving. In the same way, we need to assess the conditions in which we find ourselves in life and make a decision about how we are going to think, speak, and behave.

Part Three: My "So What?"

One Thing That Made Me Love This Book: Taylor teaches important lessons about the Jim Crow South in a way that is honest and direct but not shocking. She doesn't shy away from describing horrors such as burnings, tarring and feathering, and mob violence—but she tells just enough of the details to get her point across to her audience, many of whom are kids. She even has Papa remind Mama that the kids need to hear about their history, as difficult as it is (148). Papa doesn't dwell on the negative or get lost in his anger—instead, he uses stories to teach his children how to rise above adversity and make better lives for themselves.

Connections I Made To My Life: I really related to how much Taylor loved her father and his way of passing down the family’s stories. His stories made such an impact on her that she decided to write a book and model the characters of Stacey and Papa after him so that he could go on living through them after his death. I loved my dad very much and lost him in 2004. He was a great storyteller, sharing tales about his time in the Navy, as a kid living in the Great Depression, and as a young father trying to make ends meet for his family. There are times when I’ve thought about writing a book, too. I have to think about this a little bit more as my dad had some complicated parts of his personality, too—but maybe that would make for a more interesting character.