

SUMMER READING 2009 - EIGHTH GRADE

Historical Fiction Selections

Each student is to:

1. Read ONE title from the selection below.
2. Complete the attached summer reading packet. It is worth a test grade.
3. **Additional Bonus**: worth one test grade. Choose a SECOND title from the selection. Complete a Compare and Contrast between the two novels you have read.

Please note: **Summer Reading packets are due the first day of school.**

Students will lose 10 points for each day overdue.

In My Father's House by Ann Rinaldi

Story Summary: Many of the fiercest battles of the Civil War were fought in the home. Oscie Mason knows this all too well. The first shots of the war were fired on her front lawn - a sign of things to come. Oscie's a proud daughter of the Old South, but her stepfather, Will McLean, thinks the world of her childhood must change. Oscie won't accept anything he has to say. And the tension between them is about to explode. To escape the war, Will McLean moves the family to a quiet town call Appomattox. But the war will follow them there; as sure as the hurtful battles will continue in Oscie's home, and in her heart. Can Oscie call a truce or will all that she cherishes become a casualty of war?

Bright Freedom's Song by Gloria Houston

Story Summary: As her world begins to change, Bright Freedom Cameron holds tight to the sound of her pa's words, singing the song he wrote for her birth. More and more Ma and Pa are working long hours, often after dark, in the family barn. And then one day, when Bright meets a stranger hiding in the pigpen, she learns about life beyond her small farm firsthand. It is 1861, Bright is 14, and there is talk of a war that will divide the country. A war fought for the right to won slaves.

My Brother Sam is Dead by James Lincoln Collier & Christopher Collier

Story Summary: All his life, Tim Meeker has looked up to his brother Sam. Sam's smart and brave, and always knows the rights thing to do. In fact, everyone in town had admired Sam Meeker. Until now. Now Sam is part of the new American Revolutionary Army. He talks about defeating the British and becoming independent and free. But not everyone in town wants to be part of this new America. Most people are loyal supporters of the English king, especially Tim and Sam's father. The war is raging, and Tim knows he'll have to make a choice. But how can he choose when it means fighting his father on one side, and fighting his brother on the other?

Soldier's Heart by Gary Paulsen

Story Summary: In June 1861, when the Civil War began, Charley Goddard left his farm and enlisted in the First Minnesota Volunteers. He was 15. He didn't rightly know what a "shooting war" meant, or what he was fighting for. All he knew was that he didn't want to miss out on a great adventure. The shooting war meant the horror of combat and the wild luck of survival. It meant knowing how it feels to cross a field toward the enemy, waiting to fire. Waiting for death. Charley learned: this is how it is done.

The Historical Fiction Selections Packet

Answers may be typed. Please indicate the title and author of the novel you have selected.

1. Compile a list of ten vocabulary words. Define each word. Be sure to include the part of speech for each word.
2. In complete sentences, describe in detail the setting of the story. Be sure to include the period in American History the story takes place.
3. Complete a character sketch for the main characters. Be sure to include those characteristics the main character displays when facing survival and overcoming fear. An author uses several methods to bring a character to life for the reader. These methods include the character's thoughts, feelings, actions, and spoken words, as well as, how other characters see and feel about them. Indicate the character's name and in bullet points, list the characteristics.
4. Make a detailed list of people, places, things, and events in the story that are real - historical. Make a detailed list of people, places, things, and events in the story that are fiction - creations of the author's mind.
5. In complete sentence, describe in detail the conflict in the story. How is the conflict resolved? What would you have done differently to solve the conflict?
6. In complete sentences, explain in detail how the conflict changes the main character.
7. Uncle Henrik, a character in Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*, describes brave as "not thinking about the dangers. Just thinking about what you must do." In complete sentences explain if you agree or disagree. Use examples of the main character's actions to support your answer.
8. The conflict is over and two years have passed. Pretend you are the main character. Write a detailed letter to another story character describing life post-conflict. Be sure to choose a character that is now aware of the outcome of the story's conflict.