

8th GRADE SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

SUMMER “TO DO” LIST:

1. Return Signed Permission Slip by _____.
2. READ THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF BOOKS
3. WRITE a minimum of ten “dialectic journal” entries per novel.
4. HAVE A **GREAT** SUMMER!

Specific Instructions are included in this packet.

Please read carefully.

This should be completed in a marble composition notebook or on a Word document.

These will count for 15% of your first quarter grade.

Dear Students:

Below are tasks that you need to complete over the summer in order to get off to a great start next August. Please e-mail your teacher if you have any questions (rhall@rivercityscience.org or mmccumber@rivercityscience.org)!

1. Make sure that you are thoughtful as you read your summer novels. Next year, you will be required to respond to a couple of in-class writing prompts so we may assess your “close reading” skills as well as your analytical writing skills. We advise that you annotate (take notes) as you read in order to prepare for the assessment. One effective way to annotate is to use something called dialectical journals. We have attached information which will help guide you to use this type of journaling as you work your way through the summer reading. We expect that you to have a minimum of ten entries per book. We have also attached a copy of the format to this packet.
2. You will use your journal entries to spark dialogue when we return to school. We will collect the journals on the first day of class. Please write journals either in a notebook (Composition or Spiral) or on a word document that has been printed.

BELOW IS A LIST OF OPTIONS FOR YOUR 8th GRADE SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

Novel	Author	Synopsis
<i>Hobbit</i>	<i>J.R.R. Tolkien</i>	Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who lives a quiet life, until it is upset by a visit from a wizard named Gandalf.
<i>Crossover</i>	<i>Kwame Alexander</i>	Follow the life experiences of 12-year-old basketball player Josh Bell across several months in the autumn and early winter of his seventh-grade year at Reggie Lewis Middle School
<i>Paper Towns</i>	<i>John Green</i>	Quentin Jacobsen has spent a lifetime loving the magnificently adventurous Margo Roth Spiegelman from afar. So when she cracks open a window and climbs back into his life—dressed like a ninja and summoning him for an ingenious campaign of revenge—he follows.
<i>One and Only Ivan</i>	<i>K.A. Applegate</i>	Ivan is an easygoing gorilla. Living at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade, he has grown accustomed to humans watching him through the glass walls of his domain. He rarely misses his life in the jungle. In fact, he hardly ever thinks about it at all.
<i>Down River</i>	<i>Will Hobbs</i>	Jessie and the other rebellious teenage members of a wilderness survival team abandon their adult leader and try to run the dangerous white water of the Grand Canyon.
<i>Phoenix Rising</i>	<i>Karen Hesse</i>	Thirteen-year-old Nyle learns about relationships and death when fifteen-year-old Ezra, who was exposed to radiation leaked from a nearby nuclear plant, comes to stay at her grandmother's Vermont farmhouse.

<i>The Girls</i>	<i>Amy Goldman Koss</i>	Each of the girls in a middle-school clique reveals the strong, manipulative hold one group exerts on others, causing hurt and self-doubt among the girls.
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THE DIALECTICAL JOURNAL

The purpose of a **dialectical journal** is to identify significant pieces of text and explain why you think they are important. It is another form of highlighting/annotating text and should be used to think about, digest, summarize, question, clarify, critique, discuss and remember what is read. It is a way to take notes, using the actual text, so that when you are asked to utilize the information from the text you do not have to re-read the entire piece. Instead, you can search your notes for direct quotes to use as supporting evidence for your opinions. A dialectical journal is also an effective way to assess your comprehension.

To set up a dialectical journal, you may simply fold a piece of paper in half or create a chart on your word document. On the left hand side of the page, title the column, NOTE TAKING. This is where you will write the sentence/s or phrase/s from the text that you believe illustrates a significant idea (please put quotation marks around what you take directly from the text). On the right hand side of the page, title the column, NOTE MAKING. This is where you will make your notes (why you think this section is important).

Dialectical Journals in a Nutshell:

For the TEXT (“note taking”) column, your entries may include the following:

- Meaningful or striking quotations or paraphrasing of important passages
- Confusing or difficult quotations or passages
- Evidence of theme, tone, mood, character development, plot complication, setting significance, etc.
- Vocabulary work in context
- Figurative language such as metaphors, similes, personification, etc.
- effective &/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices
- Passages that remind you of your own life or something you’ve seen before
- Structural shifts or turns in the plot
- A passage that makes you realize something you hadn’t seen before
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols or motifs.
- Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Events you find surprising or confusing
- Passages that illustrate a specific character or setting

For the RESPONSE (“note making”) column, you have several ways to respond to a text:

- Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text
- Give your personal reactions to the passage
- Discuss the diction (vocabulary) used
- Discuss what makes the quote or passage meaningful, striking, or important
- Discuss how theme is shown
- Discuss the meaning and/or effect of figurative language
- Discuss the character’s role and/or the values of the character
- Discuss the importance of setting
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences

- Write about what it makes you think or feel
- Argue with or speak to the characters or author
- Comment on the relevance of a passage to its historical context or to the present
- Identify recurring symbols or images

Sample from *The Things They Carried* (O'Brien)

Note-taking	Note-making
"-they carried like freight trains; they carried it on their backs and shoulders-and for all the ambiguities of Vietnam, all the mysteries and unknowns, there was at least the single abiding certainty that they would never be at a loss for things to carry". p. 48.	(R) O'Brien chooses to end the first section of the novel with this sentence. He provides excellent visual details of what each soldier in Vietnam would carry for day-to-day fighting. He makes you feel the physical weight of what soldiers have to carry for simple survival. When you combine the emotional weight of loved ones at home, the fear of death, and the responsibility for the men you fight with, with this physical weight, you start to understand what soldiers in Vietnam dealt with every day. This quote sums up the confusion that the men felt about the reasons they were fighting the war, and how they clung to the only certainty - things they had to carry - in a confusing world where normal rules were suspended.

Sample from *Song of Solomon* (Toni Morrison)

Note-taking	Note-making
"Like the keeper of the lighthouse, she regarded it as a mooring, a checkpoint, some stable visual object that assured her that the world was still there; that this was life and not a dream..." p. 11.	The watermark confirms the relationship Ruth has with her husband, Macon; one of contempt and distance, one in which she has been repeatedly denied her existence as a powerful human being, but instead is treated with scorn or as somehow only worthy to have sex, bear children, care for the house. The watermark began as an expression of how she sees beauty in the world and ends as a reminder of her vision denied. At once, it gives her strength to go on AND makes her feel trapped. It is the truth of her life.
"Fluky about her own name at twelve, how much more fluky she'd become since then Macon could..." p. 19	The reader is made to love Pilate. Love her because Macon can't stand her. Love her because even at birth she breaks free of what conventional society expects of her. Her father does it for her. He gives her a man's name and to boot it is the epitome of what most good Christians would consider evil or traitorous...Pilate, the man who callously condemned Christ to death. She is everything Macon is not. She sings. He is stoical. She loves. He only feels contempt and disgust. She is colorful. He is drab. She makes and sells alcohol (which was illegal). He is the legitimate businessman. She has compassion. He cares nothing for his fellowman; he only cares about money. She is strength in her femininity, strength in a wholly female kind of way that has nothing to do with the docile stereotypes of women or the man-hating stereotypes of women, nothing conventional. She is the epitome of life. She simply is, and is not ashamed.

Required Reading Permission Slips Due _____

By signing the below, parents are stating they have read and understand the requirements of summer reading. I understand if my child does not complete these dialectical journals, they will receive a zero for 15% of their first quarter grade.

I, _____ give permission

for my child, _____,

to read the following selections:

Book #1 _____
(Please print)

Book #2 _____
(Please print)

Signed: _____
(Parent or guardian signature)

Date: _____