

Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet
Class of 2013 Summer Reading
Elizabeth Smith, Joy Oettel, Tom Cash

Reading is such a sensitive matter! As teachers we know that reading makes us better readers and that reading closely makes us scholars. We also know that forcing students to read (especially in the summer) frequently results in hostile teenagers whose distaste for reading only deepens. In the on-going effort to do what we know is best for you while also engaging you in reading something that might spark a passion for the written word, here is the assignment: Choose one (1) book from the following list **and complete the Reading Cards on it.** Then, choose a second book (2) and **complete the Cube assignment.**

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd

Set in the American South in 1964, the year of the Civil Rights Act and intensifying racial unrest, Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* is a powerful story of coming-of-age, of the ability of love to transform our lives, and the often unacknowledged longing for the universal feminine divine. Addressing the wounds of loss, betrayal, and the scarcity of love, Kidd demonstrates the power of women coming together to heal those wounds, to mother each other and themselves, and to create a sanctuary of true family and home.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

In her debut novel, Anderson's main character, fourteen-year-old Melinda Sordino, has essentially stopped speaking. One of the reasons is because the world has stopped listening to her. After calling the police on an end-of-the-summer party, Melinda enters ninth grade as a pariah, ostracized by everyone in the school, including her best friends.

Mr. Pip by Lloyd Jones

Matilda, a 13-year-old native of the village of Bougainville, follows along as her teacher, Mr. Watts, reads aloud *Great Expectations*. It is the best way to forget about the "redskins" who burn down her village and the boys who have left the village to hide in the jungle.

A story about New Guinea and Australia's invasion of the Bougainville property in 1990 (heard of it?), it is also a story of survival through invisibility. The story allows the students to be hidden from their families, and Mr. Watts, the last white man in the village, uses it to hide the discomfort of his life.

Friday Night Lights by H.G. Bissinger

Return once again to the enduring account of life in the Mojo lane, to the Permian Panthers of Odessa -- the winningest high school football team in Texas history. Odessa is not known to be a town big on dreams, but the Panthers help keep the hopes and dreams of this small, dusty town going. Socially and racially divided, its fragile economy follows the treacherous boom-bust path of the oil business. In bad times, the unemployment rate barrels out of control; in good times, its murder rate skyrockets. But every Friday night from September to December, when the Permian High School Panthers play football, this West Texas town becomes a place where dreams can come true. With frankness and compassion, Bissinger chronicles one of the Panthers' dramatic seasons and shows how single-minded devotion to the team shapes the community and inspires--and sometimes shatters--the teenagers who wear the Panthers' uniforms.

The Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen

The exhausted stories of her elders become her own when Hannah Stern visits the past in Jane Yolen's compelling, compassionate novel [The Devil's Arithmetic](#). It's an unforgiving journey to Poland in 1942 for this contemporary Jewish girl. In this tribute to the indomitable nature of the human spirit to triumph over evil, stories are the precious gifts that survive-even when loved ones do not. Read and remember the Holocaust.

Life of Pi by Yann Martel Winner of the 2002 Man Booker Prize for Fiction

Pi Patel is an unusual boy. The son of a zookeeper, he has an encyclopedic knowledge of animal behavior, a fervent love of stories, and practices not only his native Hinduism, but also Christianity and Islam. When Pi is sixteen, his family emigrates from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship, along with their zoo animals bound for new homes.

The ship sinks. Pi finds himself alone in a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and Richard Parker, a 450-pound Bengal tiger. Soon the tiger has dispatched all but Pi, whose fear, knowledge, and cunning allow him to coexist with Richard Parker for 227 days lost at sea. When they finally reach the coast of Mexico, Richard Parker flees to the jungle, never to be seen again. The Japanese authorities who interrogate Pi refuse to believe his story and press him to tell them "the truth." After hours of coercion, Pi tells a second story, a story much less fantastical, much more conventional-but is it more true?

Life of Pi is at once a realistic, rousing adventure and a meta-tale of survival that explores the redemptive power of storytelling and the transformative nature of fiction.

The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver

Marietta Greer spent her childhood in rural Kentucky determined to do two things: avoid getting pregnant and escape rural Kentucky. At the start of the novel, she has headed west in a beat-up '55 Volkswagen, changing her name to "Taylor" when her car runs out of gas in Taylorville, Illinois. By the time two tires give way in Tucson she has with her a stunned, silent three-year-old Cherokee girl who was, literally, dropped into her arms one night. She has named the child Turtle, for her strong, snapping-turtle-like grip. In Tucson Taylor finds friendship and support in Lou Ann Ruiz, a fellow Kentuckian and single mother, with whom she and Turtle share a house. Her newfound community also includes Mattie, who runs a safe house for political refugees in the upstairs rooms above her auto repair shop. The novel's theme of fear, flight, homelessness, and finding sanctuary within a community are present in Taylor's struggle to find a place where she belongs, and the more urgent plight of two Central American refugees, Estevan and Esperanza. These fellow travelers help one another create new lives and redefine the meanings of home and family.

-1989 School Library Journal Best Books of the Year

-1989 American Library Association Best Books for Young Adults

Summaries courtesy of readinggroupguides.com and amazon.com

When you attend the summer orientation session, we will talk about all of these books and help you decide which ones you might like. We encourage all of you to attend orientation because talking about books is a big part of wanting to read them. If you need more help choosing a book or completing the assignment, e-mail us at:

mary.smith2@mnps.org or joy.oettel@mnps.org or Thomas.cash@mnps.org

The Reading Cards

Assignment: Choose **one** of the book choices and create **Reading Cards** as you read the text. The cards are designed to help you learn and practice the close reading techniques and the critical reading skills important not only to becoming successful students, but also to experiencing the intrinsic rewards of reading interpretive fiction. Your ultimate goal is to comprehend much more than just what happens; you must learn to develop written and oral commentaries that reveal how the author uses structure and literary elements to convey meaning.

E valuation:

(1) Reading Cards: due second day of class -- see below for specific guidelines and directions for each card (1 card = 1 - 5x8 card)

(2) In-class written commentary: During the first or second week of the semester, your instructor will select a significant passage from the novel. You will be asked to write about the passage in terms of its importance to the novel, impact on plot and character development, literary elements, style, figurative language, etc. **You will not be allowed to use your reading cards or book on this assignment.**

(3) In-class essay question: During the first or second week of the semester, after the written commentary, you will be given a writing prompt and asked to complete an in-depth essay that answers the question and makes specific references the text. This is a timed assignment. **You will be allowed to use your reading cards and your books on this assignment.**

Procedure:

Reading Cards

- Read through the entire assignment so that you understand each part of the assignment before you begin any cards.
- Complete cards as you read...do **NOT** wait until you finish the book. Since the assignment requires a **CloseReading** of the text, the information you must collect cannot be found in movies, plot summaries, or Sparknotes / CliffsNotes, etc.
- 20 cards. 1 card = 1 - 5x8 card -- they should be lined on one side, but you may use colored cards and spiral-bound cards to suit your individual study style. You must, however, write in blue or black ink. **No pencil.**
- On the first day of school, you will assemble the cards in numerical order, but you will not do them in order. For example, Card #2 will not necessarily be the second card you do since the symbol you choose will be important to the overall work. In all likelihood, it will be one of the final cards you complete. You may write on the backs (unlined side) of cards – front and back still only constitute 1 card. Start each card on the lined side.
- Write the **Category** (Setting, Key Passages, etc.) in big, bold letters on the first line of every card. Write your initials in the upper right corner of each card. Write the number of the card in the upper left corner of each card (see sample card here).

- Cite page numbers for every item on every card, except Symbol (#1), Conflict (#4,5,6), Interpretation(#18), Personal Response (#19,20)
- Cards must cover the entire span of the book.
- The required information on cards should be easy to find and understand, but **the cards are tools, so they will not be “final draft” or perfectly neat artifacts**; they must be readable. They will, however, be written in blue or black ink. Use lists and bullets for information unless the instructions tell you to use complete sentences. Editing marks are perfectly acceptable and even encouraged.

#1 here	CATEGORY HERE	Your initials
*Info from text here (phrase, words, image, etc.)		
*Include page citation (pg. #) after writing the info.		
*Write your analysis here. This should be an explanation of why you chose this item and its significance to the work as a whole.		

All reading cards should follow this format.

Read the details of the assignment for more information.

Cards should be clearly marked and legible. Since they are to be used to help guide you through a close reading of the text, they do not have to be “perfect.”

- 1) Write the title and author of the book on the unlined side of the card.
- 2) Create a visual symbol important to the meaning of the work as a whole on the same side as the title and author. You can draw your symbol, cut it out of a magazine, take a picture or find one on the internet. If you use another person’s artwork, be sure to give him or her credit by writing the artist’s name below the symbol.
- 3) On the lined side of the card, explain your choice of symbol and its significance to the book -- in complete sentences.

Cards #2 - #20: Though the cards are numbered, you will not be able to complete them in this order. We want you to carefully read and critically analyze fiction, but also to understand the way writers use language to provide meaning and pleasure. For more information about the titles listed below or the literary terms, go to

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/575/01/> and/or

<http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/general/glossary.htm>

Setting: (Cards #2 and #3) On one card, identify at least 5 phrases or descriptions that identify the setting of the novel – you should include references to time, place, region, atmosphere (cite page #). Use bullets, phrases. On the other card, in 3-5 sentences, answer “How would the events or characters be different if they were in a different setting?”

Conflicts: (Cards #4, #5 and #6) The best plots arise from conflicts – not just events arranged in order. Early in a novel, authors introduce the main conflicts. As soon as you discover these conflicts, complete these cards: On one card, identify a character versus character conflict (human or non-human). Describe the conflict. Why does the conflict occur? On the second card, identify a character versus himself / herself conflict: Describe the conflict. Why does the conflict occur? On the third card, identify a character in conflict with nature or with society. Describe the conflict. Why does the conflict occur? After you finish reading the book, go back and explain *how* each conflict is resolved.

Key Passages: (Cards #7, #8, #9, #10, #11 and #12) Choose 6 passages from the novel that you think are important to character development, plot development, or meaning – a passage may be a line, quote, or any excerpt from the novel. Copy the passage correctly (quotation marks, cite p. #) and using complete sentences, explain what the passage reveals about either development of a character (a significant change or description), a significant development in the plot, or the meaning of the work as a whole. Make sure to **represent the beginning, middle, and end of the book**.

Point-of-View: (Card #13): Authors make a conscious decision about how they will tell the story. “Who” tells the story is one of the ways that an author emphasizes certain ideas. In your own words, describe the person (or persons) whose “eyes” you use to see what is happening. Then, write 1-3 sentences that interpret the effect of that point of view. Some questions to consider: What do you know about this narrator? What bias opinions might he/she have? Can you trust his/her account of events? How do these answers affect your understanding of the story?

Characters: (Cards #14 and #15 and Cards #16 and #17) Choose the character you find most interesting. Then, find 5 phrases that describe this character’s personality or interesting traits. Write the phrase and cite the page number. For each phrase, answer the questions: “What do I know about the character from this description?” Then, choose the character you dislike the most. Do the same thing for this character.

Escape Literature v Interpretive Literature: (Card #18) Escape literature is written purely for entertainment – to help us pass the time and “escape” from the real world. Though the reading is usually also entertaining, interpretive literature is written to broaden and deepen and sharpen our awareness of life: it takes us through the imagination, deeper into the real world. Critical reading helps you better understand and value interpretive literature. For this card, consider the novel a work of interpretive literature. Write what you believe the story reveals about human life or behavior. What is there about the novel that is real? What about the novel seems to be true in other situations? What universal truths are in this novel? **Explain** your interpretation.

Personal Response: (Cards #19 and #20) Choose one of the following and respond in complete sentences -- **Be creative and thoughtful** – not trite. . . include specific references to the time, place, plot development of the novel – must fill all of one side and part of the back side.

- Write one diary entry for one of the characters - note details that indicate when and why you are writing
- Write a letter to your teacher or your classmate about your experience reading this book – likes, dislikes, something confusing, questions you still have, rewards of reading the book, a personal connection you have to an event, character, author’s style, etc.....
- If I were casting a movie, I would cast _____ (name the actor/actress) as _____ (name the character) because . . .
- If I were _____ (name the character) then I would have because . . .
- If I chose a theme song for this novel, it would be _____ because _____.....

Reading Cube Instructions

For this assignment, you will create a cube that serves as visual representation of one of your summer reading novels. Your cube cannot represent the same book you use to make your notecards. You will turn in your cube on the second day of school. Be prepared to present your cube to the class.

Cube Specifics:

- Your cube should be approximately 12" and square.
- You decide what materials to use to make your cube. You may choose to use a covered cardboard box.
- You may draw images or use computer graphics or cut out pictures from magazines.
- Your cube should be visually appealing. Be creative and use color. You will decide what materials you will use to decorate your cube.
- Do not use plain pencil to decorate your cube. Colored pencils are okay.
- Neatness counts.
- Attach a string to the cube so that it can be hung.
- Each side of the cube should correspond with one of the categories below. Label the category that is being represented on each side. Use the questions that are listed below to give you ideas to consider. Do not just list answers to these questions. Your answers should be visually represented and you will not be able every question in each category on your cube.

Categories:

Setting

- Where does the story happen?
- When does it happen?
- Can you draw a map of the setting from the author's presentation of it?
- How does the author describe the time and place?
- What kind of terms does he/she use?
- Does he name the places? Are they already known? Do the places and/or time of the story have any associations with other significant historic events or literary works?
- How do these elements relate to one another and to the other elements of the work?

Character

- What is each character's name? Nickname?
- Is the character called a different name by different people? What might this convey?
- Does any character's name have a meaning (found by looking up the name in a good dictionary) or connotation which might indicate the role or nature of the character?
- What does the character do? How does he generally act? What does the character say? (about the action, about other characters, about himself?)
- How is the character described?

- What motivates this character? What does he/she want?
- What are this character's beliefs and values?
- At what point in the story and where (setting) is he introduced?
- How do other characters react to him?
- What do other characters say about him?
- To what extent are the other characters believable?
- Are there patterns or key words in the language used to describe this character?
- Does the author repeat any elements of the descriptions? What might this be trying to say or emphasize about the character?
- Are there any symbols used that represent a character in the novel?

Point of View

- Who tells the story?
- Is this person inside or outside the story?
- How is the narrator related to the action of the story? Principal actor? Minor character? Observer?
- If the character is outside the story, is he omniscient or is his limited in his knowledge?
- Does the narrator remember the story accurately? Is he biased? How do you know?
- What effect does the narrator's relation to the story have on the telling of the story?
- Is the narrator lying? How do you know?
- Is the narrator deceiving himself and/or you?
- If the different people narrate the story, what is the effect?

Plot/Action of the Story

- What happens in the story? (How many events and what type?)
- In what order to these events happen?
- What is the major conflict that causes these events to happen?
- What other events do these events cause?
- What happens in the story that is not directly a result of the conflict?
- How are these secondary events relevant to the main action? To the story as a whole?
- Do the major events reflect or repeat some older event or pattern of events?
- What terms does the author use to present or describe the events or actions? Do these terms evoke/raise some other associations?
- How is the conflict resolved?

Style

- What is the author's diction/word choice like? Is it formal, informal, plain, sophisticated?
- Does the diction ever seem inappropriate to the situation? How? When?
- Does the author repeat himself: words, phrases, situations, etc.?
- How does the author use literal language?

- How does the author use figurative language?
- What images does the author create?
- Does he use a pattern or patterns of images (imagery) to convey concepts?
- Does the author use allusions to other literary works or historic events?
- How or to what extent are these allusions significant?
- What details does the author describe?
- Describe the syntax (sentence structure) used by the author? Are the sentences complex or simple? Long or short and choppy?
- Is the author's syntax (sentence structure) appropriate to this diction and to the situation in the work?

Theme

[Theme is the generalization about life, reality, the human condition, etc. that the author illustrates or clarifies in his work. Theme is always a complete idea and is always stated in a complete declarative sentence.]

- What is one of the main messages about life the author is trying to convey in this novel?
- What is the story really about? What does it tell? Why was it told?
- What do you know about humanity, human situations and conditions that you did not know before?
- When did this idea become obvious to you in the work?
- If the story seems to have more than one theme, which is the strongest?
- To what extent do the other elements (style, character, etc.) work together to support the same idea or theme?
- Are there any symbols used to develop a particular theme? If so, what are they?

Many thanks to the English Department at Orange High School in Hillsborough, from whose work the Reading Card assignment was adapted.

