George Washington Carver
Engineering and Science High School
2026 Summer Enrichment

EIGHTH GRADE ENGLISH

This assignment is **mandatory** and due on the first day of school.

English - Ms. Curless

Choose and read ONE (1) of these books. *Note: these books cover a variety of subject matter and reading level - do some internet research before selecting a book. Books with hyperlinks are available via PDF.*

First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers by Loung Ung *
The Book Thief by Markus Zusack*
Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer*
Life of Pi by Yann Martel*
The Stars Beneath our Feet by David Barclay Moore
Keeper by Mal Peet
Darius the Great Is Not Okay by Adib Khorram
Half Broke Horses: A True Novel by Jeannette Walls
Children of Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi

For the book you choose, complete each assignment:

1. Keep a Reader Response Journal for each chapter of the book
2. Create a one-pager for your summer reading book. A one-pager is a unique way to provide a written and graphic interpretation of your independent reading, allowing you to be creative and experimental.
    - View some examples here

1. Reader Response Journal Instructions:

- **Please keep your journals in a physical spiral notebook that you will keep for the duration of the school year**
- Please label each journal clearly with the book title, chapter, and date you are journaling. You should do multiple journals on each page - double-sided is encouraged!
- Note: the books are all various lengths! You can do each entry by chapter or for a few chapters. Aim for 10-15 entries. **Do not do more than 15 entries** (but make sure you cover the *whole book*).

What is a Reader Response Journal (RRJ)?

A RRJ is a way for readers to actively chronicle their reactions or thoughts while reading a text. **A RRJ is *not* a summary of the chapter!** Here are some ideas to get you started on your journals:

- ✓ Examine how the author uses examples to illustrate a point.
- ✓ Identify a chapter where the character makes an important discovery.
- ✓ Identify favorite chapters; identify confusing ones. Explain your reason.
- ✓ Formulate questions about the reading that you want to ask in class.
- ✓ Explore and reflect on similar experiences or insights that you have had.
- ✓ Write about specific experiences of your own or those of others that relate to the chapter. You may include experiences that support or contradict what the author has written.
- ✓ Discuss ideas with which you agree or disagree. Identify chapters to which you have a strong reaction (either positive or negative).
- ✓ Discuss ideas or concepts that you have learned.
- ✓ Again: **Do not summarize the chapters!** Journals that are just summary will receive an 80%.

2. Summer Reading One-Pager Assignment

Assignment: Create a one-pager for your summer reading book. A one-pager is a unique way to provide a written and graphic interpretation of your independent reading, allowing you to be creative and experimental. View some examples here.

Formatting Guidelines:

- Use **one page** only! Use standard 8 ½ x 11 white paper (computer/printer paper with no lines)
- Fill the entire page. No space should remain empty.
- Clearly write the title and author of the book on the page.
- Add your name in the bottom right corner of the page
- All work must be hand-written. Fully digital versions will not be accepted. You may include cutouts of images from magazines or the internet.
- Be creative with placement, color, and font. You can use illustrations or cut-out/print images. Everything on the page should communicate your understanding and interpretation of the reading.

Your one-pager must include these elements:

- ☐ **Two notable excerpts** (quotations) from the reading that stand out as important. Write them anywhere on the page. Cite each quote using parentheses (Author's last name page #).
- ☐ **An analytical response to each quote** you selected (an interpretation/explanation of its significance—answer "why does this quote stand out to me?" and "how is it significant to the development of the characters, theme, or big ideas in the story?")
- ☐ **Three meaningful images** that create a "visual focus" on your one-pager. These images should be symbolic representations of the theme or main idea of the story.
- ☐ Come up with **one question** that you could ask a fellow reader about a character, theme, conflict, etc. and then **write thoughtful answers** for them. These answers should **not** be yes/no answers or even one-word answers; the answers need to be deep and meaningful, delving into a character's identity or causes of important plot points. (Try to use "why" and "how" questions.) **Make sure your answer is clearly written near the question.**
- ☐ **A personal statement** about what you have read. What did the reading mean to you? What is your opinion, final thought, big question, or personal connection?
- ☐ **A theme statement**: What is the theme of the story? Use the theme generator below to help you create the statement.

Theme Generator (use this strategy to help you write a theme statement)

a. Begin with an -ing verb: ***Taking***
b. Followed by an abstract term: ***control of life***
c. Use "may lead to" or "may result in": ***may lead to***
d. Add another abstract term: ***independence and invincibility***
e. Theme: "***Taking control of life may lead to a feeling of independence and invincibility.***"

8th Grade English Supply List:	
Required: ✓ Spiral notebook (should be used over the summer for the RRJ) ✓ Pencil sharpener ✓ Page flags for books ✓ Crayons, colored pencils, or markers (a basic set is fine) ✓ Dry erase markers for personal use	*Recommended:* ✓ 3 ring binder just for English ✓ 3-hole pocket folder (not an insert) ✓ Binder divider tabs ✓ Lined paper ✓ Index cards ✓ Highlighters ✓ Three-ring binder hole punch ✓ Extra Chromebook charger

BOOK SUMMARIES:

First They Killed My Father **by Luong Ung:** "Chronicles the brutality of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, from the author's forced "evacuation" of Phnom Penh in 1975 to her family's subsequent movements from town to town and eventual separation."
Available as a free e-book and as an audiobook download from the Free Library

The Book Thief **by Markus Zusack:** "It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still.

By her brother's graveside, Liesel's life is changed when she picks up a single object, partially hidden in the snow. It is The Gravedigger's Handbook, left there by accident, and it is her first act of book thievery.

So begins a love affair with books and words, as Liesel, with the help of her accordion-playing foster father, learns to read. Soon she is stealing books from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, wherever there are books to be found. But these are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jewish fist-fighter in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up, and closed down.

The Book Thief is a story about the power of words to make worlds. In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time."

Available as a PDF and from the Free Library

Into the Wild **by Jon Krakauer*:** "In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given $25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later,

his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of *Into the Wild*."
Available as a PDF and from the Free Library

***Life of Pi* by Yann Martel:** "After the sinking of a cargo ship, a solitary lifeboat remains bobbing on the wild blue Pacific. The only survivors from the wreck are a sixteen-year-old boy named Pi, a hyena, a wounded zebra, an orangutan—and a 450-pound royal bengal tiger. The scene is set for one of the most extraordinary and beloved works of fiction in recent years. Universally acclaimed upon publication, *Life of Pi* is a modern classic."
Available as a PDF and from the Free Library

***The Stars Beneath our Feet* by David Barclay Moore:** "It's Christmas Eve in Harlem, but twelve-year-old Lolly Rachpaul and his mom aren't celebrating. They're still reeling from his older brother's death in a gang-related shooting just a few months earlier. Then Lolly's mother's girlfriend brings him a gift that will change everything: two enormous bags filled with Legos. Lolly's always loved Legos, and he prides himself on following the kit instructions exactly. Now, faced with a pile of building blocks and no instructions, Lolly must find his own way forward.

His path isn't clear—and the pressure to join a "crew," as his brother did, is always there. When Lolly and his friend are beaten up and robbed, joining a crew almost seems like the safe choice. But building a fantastical Lego city at the community center provides Lolly with an escape—and an unexpected bridge back to the world.

David Barclay Moore paints a powerful portrait of a boy teetering on the edge—of adolescence, of grief, of violence—and shows how Lolly's inventive spirit helps him build a life with firm foundations and open doors."
Free Library ebook

***Keeper* by Mal Peet:** "When Paul Faustino of LA NACION flips on his tape recorder for an exclusive interview with El Gato — the phenomenal goalkeeper who single-handedly brought his team the World Cup — the seasoned reporter quickly learns that this will be no ordinary story. Instead, the legendary El Gato ("The Cat") quietly narrates a spellbinding tale that begins in a mythic corner of the South American rain forest, where a ghostly but very real mentor, the Keeper, emerges to teach the gangly boy the most thrilling secrets of the game. Combining vivid imagery and heart-stopping action, this evocative, strikingly ethereal novel about loyalty, passion, and magic will haunt readers, regardless of their love for soccer, long after the story is ended."
Free library ebook

***Darius the Great Is Not Okay* by Adib Khorram:** "Darius Kellner speaks better Klingon than Farsi, and he knows more about Hobbit social cues than Persian ones. He's a Fractional Persian—half, his mom's side—and his first-ever trip to Iran is about to change his life.

Darius has never really fit in at home, and he's sure things are going to be the same in Iran. His clinical depression doesn't exactly help matters, and trying to explain his medication to his grandparents only makes things harder. Then Darius meets Sohrab, the boy next door, and everything changes. Soon, they're spending their days together, playing soccer, eating faludeh, and talking for hours on a secret rooftop overlooking the city's skyline. Sohrab calls him Darioush—the original Persian version of his name—and Darius has never felt more like himself than he does now that he's Darioush to Sohrab.

Adib Khorram's brilliant debut is for anyone who's ever felt not good enough—then met a friend who makes them feel so much better than okay."
Free Library ebook

Half Broke Horses: A True Novel **by Jeannette Walls: "**"Those old cows knew trouble was coming before we did." So begins the story of Lily Casey Smith, Jeannette Walls's no-nonsense, resourceful, and spectacularly compelling grandmother. By age six, Lily was helping her father break horses. At fifteen, she left home to teach in a frontier town—riding five hundred miles on her pony, alone, to get to her job. She learned to drive a car and fly a plane. And, with her husband, Jim, she ran a vast ranch in Arizona. She raised two children, one who is Jeannette's memorable mother, Rosemary Smith Walls, unforgettably portrayed in *The Glass Castle*.

Lily survived tornadoes, droughts, floods, the Great Depression, and the most heartbreaking personal tragedy. She bristled at prejudice of all kinds—against women, Native Americans, and anyone else who didn't fit the mold. Rosemary Smith Walls always told Jeannette that she was like her grandmother, and in this true-life novel, Jeannette Walls channels that kindred spirit. *Half Broke Horses* is Laura Ingalls Wilder for adults, as riveting and dramatic as Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* or Beryl Markham's *West with the Night*. Destined to become a classic, it will transfix readers everywhere."
Free Library ebook

Children of Blood and Bone **by Tomi Adeyemi:** "They killed my mother.
They took our magic.

They tried to bury us.

Now we rise.

Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orïsha hummed with magic. Burners ignited flames, Tiders beckoned waves, and Zélie's Reaper mother summoned forth souls.

But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, maji were killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope.

Now Zélie has one chance to bring back magic and strike against the monarchy. With the help of a rogue princess, Zélie must outwit and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good.

Danger lurks in Orïsha, where snow leoponaires prowl and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers and her growing feelings for an enemy."

PDF of the first 6 chapters; Free Library audiobook and ebook; ***note: this PDF is only the first 6 chapters, so you will need to get the rest somewhere else!***