

Rising Ninth Grade Summer Reading Confirmation

Name:

Directions: Your summer reading requirements are divided into three sections, each described in the following form. This form should be completed, signed by the student and parent, and turned in by **Friday, August 17**. Remember to also bring the writing assignment from Step One with you on August 16.

Step One:

- Read *The Trojan War* by Olivia Coolidge.
- Compose a typed, double-spaced essay answering **one** of the following questions:

Option One: After reading *The Trojan War*, choose at least five chapters to summarize. In your own words, summarize the events with a 5-7 sentence paragraph for each of the five chapters.

Option Two: Upon reflection, which of the characters in *The Trojan War* is the most heroic? What qualities or traits define a hero, and what actions does your chosen character take to demonstrate these qualities. Your essay should be 1-2 pages long.

Step Two:

- Choose a book from the attached list and read your selection in its entirety.

Please list the selected book and author below:

Step Three:

- Read an additional 300 pages from a book or books of your choice. Make sure that your selection is approved by your parent.

Please list the selected book(s), author(s) and number of pages below:

Please choose one of the following options and sign the statement below. Have your parent sign in the space provided.

_____ I completed all three steps as they are described above.

_____ I did not complete all three steps as they are described above. (If you choose this option, you must provide an explanation of what you did and did not complete to receive partial credit. If you do not provide an explanation, you will not receive any participation credit.)

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Rising Ninth Grade Step Two Summer Reading List

Remember that you can check Lexile for additional information about each book, including the difficulty level of each book and a summary of the plot.

Tier 1 (855L - 955L)

Adams, Richard - *Watership Down*

880L

Set in England's Downs, a once idyllic rural landscape, this stirring tale of adventure, courage, and survival follows a band of very special creatures on their flight from the intrusion of man and the certain destruction of their home. Led by a stouthearted pair of brothers, they journey forth from their native Sandleford Warren through the harrowing trials posed by predators and adversaries, to a mysterious promised land and a more perfect society.

Alcott, Louisa May - *Little Women*

750L

Little Women is a novel by American author Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888), which was originally published in two volumes in 1868 and 1869. Alcott wrote the books rapidly over several months at the request of her publisher. The novel follows the lives of four sisters—Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March—detailing their passage from childhood to womanhood, and is loosely based on the author and her three sisters. Little Women was an immediate commercial and critical success, and readers demanded to know more about the characters. Alcott quickly completed a second volume, entitled Good Wives. It was also successful. The two volumes were issued in 1880 in a single work entitled Little Women. Although Little Women was a novel for girls, it differed notably from the current writings for children, especially girls. The novel addressed three major themes: "domesticity, work, and true love, all of them interdependent and each necessary to the achievement of its heroine's individual identity." Little Women "has been read as a romance or as a quest, or both. It has been read as a family drama that validates virtue over wealth", but also "as a means of escaping that life by women who knew its gender constraints only too well."

Beagle, Peter S. - *The Last Unicorn*

570L

Since it was first published in 1968, Beagle's beloved fantasy novel has been made into a stage play and a film—and now this gorgeous, emotive graphic novel adaptation. Set in a fully realized but slightly tongue-in-cheek fantasy world that has inspired everything from The Princess Bride to Stardust, Beagle's story is a romantic fable about a regal unicorn who leaves the forest she has protected since time immemorial to find more of her kin. After a short spell of imprisonment by a witch's traveling circus, she journeys onward with an accident-prone magician, hoping to find the answer to her quest in the land of a cold-hearted king and a monstrously fearsome red bull. Along the way, the unicorn and her good-hearted but hapless companion have many encounters, including one with a Robin Hood–esque group of bandits who seem dropped in from a Monty Python skit. Beagle's sumptuously descriptive writing, adapted ably by Gillis, casts a spell throughout, while De Liz's glowing, painterly artwork meshes perfectly with the haunting otherworldly beauty of the story.

Card, Orson Scott - *Ender's Game*

780L

Once again, the Earth is under attack. An alien species is poised for a final assault. The survival of humanity depends on a military genius who can defeat the aliens. But who? Ender Wiggin. Brilliant. Ruthless. Cunning. A tactical and strategic master. And a child. Recruited for military training by the world government, Ender's childhood ends the moment he enters

his new home: Battle School. Among the elite recruits Ender proves himself to be a genius among geniuses. He excels in simulated war games. But is the pressure and loneliness taking its toll on Ender? Simulations are one thing. How will Ender perform in real combat conditions? After all, Battle School is just a game.

Isn't it?

Hinton, S.E. - *The Outsiders*

750L

No one ever said life was easy. But Ponyboy is pretty sure that he's got things figured out. He knows that he can count on his brothers, Darry and Sodapop. And he knows that he can count on his friends—true friends who would do anything for him, like Johnny and Two-Bit. And when it comes to the Socs—a vicious gang of rich kids who enjoy beating up on "greasers" like him and his friends—he knows that he can count on them for trouble. But one night someone takes things too far, and Ponyboy's world is turned upside down...

Written over forty-five years ago, *The Outsiders* is a dramatic and enduring work of fiction. S. E. Hinton's classic story of a boy who finds himself on the outskirts of regular society remains as powerful today as it was the day it was first published.

Lowry, Lois - *The Giver*

760L

The Giver, the 1994 Newbery Medal winner, has become one of the most influential novels of our time. The haunting story centers on twelve-year-old Jonas, who lives in a seemingly ideal, if colorless, world of conformity and contentment. Not until he is given his life assignment as the Receiver of Memory does he begin to understand the dark, complex secrets behind his fragile community. Lois Lowry has written three companion novels to *The Giver*, including *Gathering Blue*, *Messenger*, and *Son*.

Marshall, Catherine - *Christy*

930L

In the year 1912, nineteen-year-old Christy Huddleston leaves home to teach school in the Smoky Mountains -- and comes to know and love the resilient people of the region, with their fierce pride, their dark superstitions, their terrible poverty, and their yearning for beauty and truth. But her faith will be severely challenged by trial and tragedy, by the needs and unique strengths of two remarkable young men, and by a heart torn between true love and unwavering devotion.

Pelzer, John - *A Child Called It*

850L

This book chronicles the unforgettable account of one of the most severe child abuse cases in California history. It is the story of Dave Pelzer, who was brutally beaten and starved by his emotionally unstable, alcoholic mother: a mother who played tortuous, unpredictable games--games that left him nearly dead. He had to learn how to play his mother's games in order to survive because she no longer considered him a son, but a slave; and no longer a boy, but an "it."

Dave's bed was an old army cot in the basement, and his clothes were torn and raunchy. When his mother allowed him the luxury of food, it was nothing more than spoiled scraps that even the dogs refused to eat. The outside world knew nothing of his living nightmare. He had nothing or no one to turn to, but his dreams kept him alive--dreams of someone taking care of him, loving him and calling him their son.

Sachar, Louis - *Holes*

660L

Stanley Yelnats is under a curse. A curse that began with his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather and has since followed generations of Yelnatses. Now Stanley has been unjustly sent to a boys' detention center, Camp Green Lake, where the boys build character by spending all day, every day digging holes exactly five feet wide and five feet deep. There is no lake at Camp Green Lake. But there are an awful lot of holes.

It doesn't take long for Stanley to realize there's more than character improvement going on at Camp Green Lake. The boys are digging holes because the warden is looking for something. But what could be buried under a dried-up lake? Stanley tries to dig up the truth in this inventive and darkly humorous tale of crime and punishment—and redemption.

Wiesel, Elie - *Night*

570L

Night is Elie Wiesel's masterpiece, a candid, horrific, and deeply poignant autobiographical account of his survival as a teenager in the Nazi death camps. This new translation by Marion Wiesel, Elie's wife and frequent translator, presents this seminal memoir in the language and spirit truest to the author's original intent. And in a substantive new preface, Elie reflects on the enduring importance of Night and his lifelong, passionate dedication to ensuring that the world never forgets man's capacity for inhumanity to man.

Night offers much more than a litany of the daily terrors, everyday perversions, and rampant sadism at Auschwitz and Buchenwald; it also eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be.

Hemingway, Ernest - *The Old Man and the Sea*

940L

The Old Man and the Sea is one of Hemingway's most enduring works. Told in language of great simplicity and power, it is the story of an old Cuban fisherman, down on his luck, and his supreme ordeal -- a relentless, agonizing battle with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream.

Here Hemingway recasts, in strikingly contemporary style, the classic theme of courage in the face of defeat, of personal triumph won from loss. Written in 1952, this hugely successful novella confirmed his power and presence in the literary world and played a large part in his winning the 1954 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Tier 2 (956L - 1055L)

Hamilton, Edith - *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*

1040L

Since its original publication by Little, Brown and Company in 1942, Edith Hamilton's Mythology has sold millions of copies throughout the world and established itself as a perennial bestseller in its various available formats: hardcover, trade paperback, mass market paperback, and e-book. Mythology succeeds like no other book in bringing to life for the modern reader the Greek, Roman, and Norse myths and legends that are the keystone of Western culture - the stories of gods and heroes that have inspired human creativity from antiquity to the present.

Hugo, Victor - *Les Miserables***1010L**

Introducing one of the most famous characters in literature, Jean Valjean—the noble peasant imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread—*Les Misérables* ranks among the greatest novels of all time. In it, Victor Hugo takes readers deep into the Parisian underworld, immerses them in a battle between good and evil, and carries them to the barricades during the uprising of 1832 with a breathtaking realism that is unsurpassed in modern prose. Within his dramatic story are themes that capture the intellect and the emotions: crime and punishment, the relentless persecution of Valjean by Inspector Javert, the desperation of the prostitute Fantine, the amorality of the rogue Thénardier, and the universal desire to escape the prisons of our own minds. *Les Misérables* gave Victor Hugo a canvas upon which he portrayed his criticism of the French political and judicial systems, but the portrait that resulted is larger than life, epic in scope—an extravagant spectacle that dazzles the senses even as it touches the heart.

Verne, Jules - *Journey to the Center of the Earth***1040L**

A pioneer in the genre of science fiction writing, Jules Verne possessed an uncanny ability to imagine — often with startling accuracy — the future possibilities of science. In this classic novel, first published in 1864, the author introduces readers to Otto Lidenbrock, a professor of geology who ventures into a fantastical world within an extinct Icelandic volcano. Verne's vivid imagination and masterful storytelling ability has made this book a popular choice among readers for more than 140 years. This version is believed to be the most faithful rendition into English of this classic currently in the public domain. The few notes of the translator are located near the point where they are referenced.

Wallace, Lew - *Ben Hur***990L**

Ben-Hur is one of the best selling books of all times. This poignant novel intertwines the life stories of a Jewish charioteer named Judah Ben-Hur and Jesus Christ. It explores the themes of betrayal and redemption. Ben-Hur's family is wrongly accused and convicted of treason during the time of Christ. Ben-Hur fights to clear his family's name and is ultimately inspired by the rise of Jesus Christ and his message. A powerful, compelling novel.

Tier 3 (1056L - 1165L)**Frank, Anne - *Diary of a Young Girl*****1080L**

Discovered in the attic in which she spent the last years of her life, Anne Frank's remarkable diary has since become a world classic—a powerful reminder of the horrors of war and an eloquent testament to the human spirit. In 1942, with Nazis occupying Holland, a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl and her family fled their home in Amsterdam and went into hiding. For the next two years, until their whereabouts were betrayed to the Gestapo, they and another family lived cloistered in the "Secret Annex" of an old office building. Cut off from the outside world, they faced hunger, boredom, the constant cruelties of living in confined quarters, and the ever-present threat of discovery and death. In her diary Anne Frank recorded vivid impressions of her experiences during this period. By turns thoughtful, moving, and amusing, her account offers a fascinating commentary on human courage and frailty and a compelling self-portrait of a sensitive and spirited young woman whose promise was tragically cut short.

Homer - *The Iliad* (Robert Fagles translation)

1165L

Dating to the ninth century B.C., Homer's timeless poem still vividly conveys the horror and heroism of men and gods wrestling with towering emotions and battling amidst devastation and destruction, as it moves inexorably to the wrenching, tragic conclusion of the Trojan War. Renowned classicist Bernard Knox observes in his superb introduction that although the violence of the *Iliad* is grim and relentless, it coexists with both images of civilized life and a poignant yearning for peace.

Wells, H.G. - *The Time Machine*

1070L

The *Time Machine* is a science fiction novel by H. G. Wells, published in 1895. Wells is generally credited with the popularisation of the concept of time travel by using a vehicle that allows an operator to travel purposefully and selectively. The term "time machine", coined by Wells, is now universally used to refer to such a vehicle. This work is an early example of the Dying Earth subgenre. The portion of the novel that sees the Time Traveller in a distant future where the sun is huge and red also places *The Time Machine* within the realm of Eschatology; that is the study of the end times, the end of the world, and the ultimate destiny of mankind. *The Time Machine* has since been adapted into two feature films of the same name, as well as two television versions, and a large number of comic book adaptations. It has also indirectly inspired many more works of fiction in many media.