

June 2020

Dear Seventh Grader,

I am looking forward to your August arrival! In the meantime, please enjoy your summer break AND your summer reading. Choose **ONE** book from the list below and complete the **THREE** assignments that follow. Take care not to choose a book you have already read as one of your assignments is to take the AR test.

Speaking of the AR test, an OptionC email will be sent with a link to the *Accelerated Reader* website since you won't have your tablet. You can also access information on the school website. The AR website will be undergoing an update starting the week of June 8th. Access for summer AR testing will not be available until June 22. It will end on July 31st, so be sure to have your test completed by then. **ANY AR QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO MRS. CUNNINGHAM AT cunninghamt@stsusanna.org.**

Any questions about the books or other assignments should be sent to me at thomasn@stsusanna.org. You'll want to have your written assignments ready to turn in when school starts. Let me know if you will have any issues with completing the test or assignments by the dates requested.

Very sincerely,
Miss Thomas

POSTED by John David Anderson

In middle school, words aren't just words. They can be weapons. They can be gifts. The right words can win you friends or make you enemies. They can come back to haunt you. Sometimes they can change things forever.

When cell phones are banned at Branton Middle School, Frost and his friends Deedee, Wolf, and Bench come up with a new way to communicate: leaving sticky notes for each other all around the school. It catches on, and soon all the kids in school are leaving notes—though for every kind and friendly one, there is a cutting and cruel one as well.

In the middle of this, a new girl named Rose arrives at school and sits at Frost's lunch table. Rose is not like anyone else at Branton Middle School, and it's clear that the close circle of friends Frost has made for himself won't easily hold another. As the sticky-note war escalates, and the pressure to choose sides mounts, Frost soon realizes that after this year, nothing will ever be the same (Barnes and Noble).

INSIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF A CACTUS by Dusti Bowling

Aven Green loves to tell people that she lost her arms in an alligator wrestling match, or a wildfire in Tanzania, but the truth is she was born without them. And when her parents take a job running Stagecoach Pass, a rundown western theme park in Arizona, Aven moves with them across the country knowing that she'll have to answer the question over and over again.

Her new life takes an unexpected turn when she bonds with Connor, a classmate who also feels isolated because of his own disability, and they discover a room at Stagecoach Pass that holds bigger secrets than Aven ever could have imagined. It's hard to solve a mystery, help a friend, and face your worst fears. But Aven's about to discover she can do it all . . . even without arms (Barnes and Noble).

AL CAPONE DOES MY SHIRTS by Gennifer Choldenko

Today I moved to Alcatraz, a twelve-acre rock covered with cement, topped with bird turd and surrounded by water. I'm not the only kid who lives here. There are twenty-three other kids who live on the island because their dads work as guards or cooks or doctors or electricians for the prison, like my dad does. And then there are a ton of murderers, rapists, hit men, con men, stickup men, embezzlers, connivers, burglars, kidnappers and maybe even an innocent man or two, though I doubt it. The convicts we have are the kind other prisons don't want. I never knew prisons could be picky, but I guess they can. You get to Alcatraz by being the worst of the worst. Unless you're me. I came here because my mother said I had to (Barnes and Noble).

OUT OF MY MIND by Sharon Draper

Eleven-year-old Melody is not like most people. She can't walk. She can't talk. She can't write. All because she has cerebral palsy. But she also has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She's the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Most people—her teachers, her doctors, her classmates—dismiss her as mentally challenged because she can't tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by her disability. And she's determined to let everyone know it...somehow (Barnes and Noble).

FREAK THE MIGHTY by Rodman Philbrick

Two boys - a slower learner stuck in the body of a teenage giant and a tiny Einstein in leg braces - forge a unique friendship when they pair up to create one formidable human force (Barnes and Noble).

FRONT DESK by Kelly Yang

Mia Tang has a lot of secrets.

Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests.

Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed.

Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language?

It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams? (Barnes and Noble).

COMPLETE THESE ASSIGNMENTS FOR YOUR BOOK OF CHOICE.

Assignment #1: Take the AR test for your book. You will do this at home as we will be unable to open the computer lab as usual for summer testing. Take the test between June 22nd and July 31st. Remember that an OptionC email will be sent with a link to the Accelerated Reader website since you won't have your tablet. You can also access information on the school website. ANY AR QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO MRS. CUNNINGHAM AT cunninghamt@stsusanna.org.

Assignment #2: Create this on blank paper (NO loose leaf) - any color. If you need a larger piece of paper or small poster board, that is fine too. Please do not use a really large piece of poster board. You may do it all by computer, all by hand (if you are a neat, legible writer and careful worker), or cut and paste technologically or with actual scissors and a glue stick! Include the following info in an ENGAGING way that incorporates ideas from the book and catches the eye using decoration, color, and neatness. Completed examples from former students follow at the end of this document.

1. Author
2. Title of book (underline or italicize)
3. Illustration/printed image (use color) of your favorite scene from the book and detailed explanation of why.
4. Brief summary of the plot in your own words. (3-5 sentences)
5. If this book was a color, what would it be and why?

6. Provide two vivid (look this word up) adjectives to describe your novel's main character. Provide text evidence of each by providing the page number AND the excerpt straight from the story (put it in italics to show these are not your words) to prove your point.
7. Who (person or group) would you recommend this novel to and why? Explain your reasoning clearly and completely.

******Presentation COUNTS – use color, decoration, and neatness******

Example (excluding illustrations and presentation) from a former student's work:

1. **Author:** Rodman Philbrick
2. **Title:** *Zane and the Hurricane* (underline or italicize)
3. **Illustration or image (use color) and detailed explanation like the following:** My favorite scene from the book was when they lost their canoe, and Malvina was telling jokes. I like this part because I like telling jokes. Her jokes were actually pretty bad. They were not really funny because they did not make a lot of sense. I really liked this part because for most of the book, it was pretty sad, and they faced a lot of difficulties. Malvina tried to make everyone happier by telling jokes. She can be funny without even trying because of the way she talks. It was nice that she tried to make things better, so they didn't get so down that they didn't want to do anything. They had to keep trying to find a safe place, and they couldn't do that if they all gave up.
4. **Summary:** Zane went to visit his grandmother in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hit. He got separated from his grandmother because he was chasing his dog, Bandy. He met up with Mr. Tru and Malvina. This man and young girl traveled with Zane and Bandy in a canoe. They tried to find shelter, food, and other people. They ran into many problems along the way. In the end, they made it to safety, and Zane was able to contact his mother. He safely returned to New Hampshire with his mom and grandmother. Mr. Tru and Malvina were also safe, and they remained friends with Zane.
5. **Color:** If this book was a color, it would be black because there was no power during the hurricane. The wind took out the power, and there was no light.
6. **Vivid Adjectives:** Zane is clever and passionate. Zane is trapped in Miss Trissy's attic. The water is rising fast, and it is really hot. He knows he has to do something fast. He says to himself, "*My mom is always saying don't be mad, be smart. What is the strongest part of the human body? Legs, Zane, legs. You know that. Use your brain. And your feet*" (50-51). He broke the attic vent slats by kicking with both feet over and over again until they were broken, and they could breathe air. Also, Zane cares very much for his dog, Bandy. He jumps out of the church van on his way out of danger to chase after Bandy who jumped out of the vehicle into traffic. Zane says, "*I know in my heart why Bandy jumped out of the van. I can feel what he is feeling. He's running away from what frightens him, trying to get to a place that's safe. And now he's all alone in traffic, with a million cars*" (27).
7. **Recommendation:** I would recommend this book to my cousin, Wyatt. He is a year older than me and enjoys learning about the weather. He likes to read books about natural disasters. Usually he likes non-fiction, but I think this would be a good fiction book for him. Reading this

book would tell him a story about people that lived through a hurricane and what it was like. He also loves dogs, so I think he would really like Bandy.

****Two more examples of completed work by former students can be found at the end of this document.****

Assignment #3: All of these novels share common big ideas of tolerance, personal growth, and acceptance. The characters come to know and accept more about themselves - faults and all. This is the start of your seventh grade year. Tell me who YOU are, so I won't forget!

What do you consider your strengths and areas of opportunity for improvement?

What are your hobbies and passions, your dreams and ambitions, your likes and dislikes?

How do you learn best? What subjects interest you more than others?

What causes you fear, anxiety or worry?

What makes you laugh or brings you joy?

With whom do you share your home? Do you have any pets?

What is important for ME to know about YOU? Be specific and detailed. You are most welcome to cover any topics you wish beyond those about which I have inquired.

Please present this in a well-organized and TYPED paragraph (NO lists) that is at least ONE PAGE with 1.5" spacing.

Summary

Mason Buttle was just a normal kid living in a normal house at the edge of Swaggertown Road, until his best friend Benny Klimartin died after falling from a ladder on a tree house. The lieutenant constantly questions Mason, but Mason is sure he has no more to say. He has told the lieutenant the full story time and time again, but the lieutenant still thinks there is more. The lieutenant begins to make conclusions as to what happened based on what he thinks he knows. But what if there is something more. Something both Mason and the lieutenant don't know. What if the person responsible for Benny's death is hiding in plain sight.

Color

If this book was a color it would be green because as it states in the book when Mason saw the ugly, muddy green it meant something was bad or wrong. This is true in the book as there were many bad times such as all the deaths, bullying, losing Calvin, and abuse to the dog. However, green can also mean life as in plants are green when they are alive. All life brings joy. In this book there is also a lot of joy including finding Calvin, discovering the root cellar, and getting to keep moonie! This is why the color green can represent both the good and the bad in this book.

Recommendation

I would recommend this book to my sister, Earin. She is two years younger than me. She likes mysteries especially about deaths. She also likes dogs so I think she would like the role that Moonie plays in the story.

The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle

By: Leslie Connor

Favorite Scene



My favorite scene from the book was when the rescue team saved Calvin Chumsky from the tunnel using dish soap. I like this scene because of the clever thinking the woman in charge used to get Calvin out. She decided to just use dish soap as a lubricant and the force of gravity for Calvin to just slide out. I also liked this scene because of the overwhelming joy it brought to Calvin, Mason, all the rescuers, and bystanders.

Two vivid adjectives to describe mason are...

Reliable

When Calvin went missing and no one knew where he was Mason was the person that they could all count on to find Calvin.

I know where Calvin is!
I scramble up. Hurry to the root cellar door.
I reach into the thorns and haul it open.
Inside, I stand below the Shaft of the Dead Man.
All is dark. Too dark. I tip the flashlight up.
Shine it into the shaft. What am I seeing?
Is it anything? I call, "Calvin! Calvin!" Something comes down on me. Like hot rain. Stings my head.
Drips down my shoulders and arms. There's a smell.
Not so good. I step up on a bucket.
I reach my arm up into the Shaft of the Dead Man.
Something fits in my palm. I grab it. Tug it. Pull it down.
And there I am holding one tan-sandy shoe. "Mason?" "Calvin?" "Calvin!"
(page 222-223)

Courageous

Matt is abusing his dog for coming down to the Buttle's house again and Mason speaks up.
I step up again. I say, "Hey, Matt. Hey."
He jerks Moonie by the neck swings him side to side.
Moonie's feet have to go fast. Stepping left. Stepping right.
I hear the small cry from him. No bark.
More like a mew from a kitten.
I tell Matt, "Hey now. It's not his fault.
Just be nice to him. Come on, Matt. Please."
(page 165)

THE TRUTH AS TOLD BY

MASON BUTTLE

BY LESLIE CONNOR

Mason Buttle is a kid who can barely read and write and sweats. A lot. Fifteen months ago, Mason's best friend, Benny Kilmartin, died. He was found dead in the Buttle's Orchard. Mason and his new friend, Calvin Chumsky, get picked on everyday by Matt and Lance, two popular kids. When Calvin and Mason discover a hidden root cellar in Mason's backyard, everything changes. The root cellar is now their secret hideout and they figured out a way to have light in it. When trying to escape Matt and Lance from apples, Calvin slid into the root cellar too fast and accidentally fell into one of the holes. Calvin managed to survive and Mason later found out how Benny got killed.

Mason is determined and polite. Mason and Calvin were digging a hole and according to the text, it says that "Back outside, the hole is deep. The digging gets crazy hard. Last eighteen inches takes the longest. I drop the digger into that hole. Bend my knees -full squat- and lift it out again. I pluck about a cup of dirt at a time" (125). This shows that he works hard and is determined to reach his goal. Mason is polite because on page 121 the lieutenant comes even though the lieutenant wasn't supposed to come on that day, Mason says "Good morning" and talks politely to the lieutenant even though Mason didn't want him to come on that day.



My favorite scene from this book is when Calvin and Mason were painting the walls of the root cellar. This was my favorite scene because when Mason was painting, he felt that all of the weight was taken off of his shoulders. The root cellar was an escape from reality for Mason and Calvin. No Matt or Lance, no being covered in apples, just each other's company.

Someone who I would recommend this novel to is my friend Sophie because she loves books with a lot of plot twists and suspense. I think this book is perfect for her cause she also loves apples.

If this book was a color, it would be blue because blue can mean a lot of things. The color blue could be happy or sad, which I think is a good color for this book because it has a lot of happy and sad moments.