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Vincent Ferrer High School English Department
Summer Reading Assignment for Incoming Freshmen
September 2019



Important! Read all directions carefully! Part of your grade will be based on how well you followed the instructions!

Part 1: Required Reading: All incoming freshmen must read the following novel: *The Book Thief* (Markus Zusak) A sophisticated story of Liesel Meminger and her life in World War II era Germany. One of the most unusual and unexpected narrators EVER.

Part 2: Required Reading: In addition to the Part 1 book, you must read three additional books, at least one of which must come from the list below. For these books, you may choose fiction or nonfiction, but all books should be age and reading level appropriate for a high school freshman. If you need ideas, we recommend a trip to your local library or bookstore, but there are also thousands of websites devoted to teen reading as well. Ask your teachers and friends for suggestions!

Part 3: Complete the **Summer Reading Log**, including required signatures. This will be collected along with your essay in September.

Part 4: Writing Assignment: Write an essay of approximately 500 words in which you **compare** the protagonist of *The Book Thief* to the protagonist of one other book you read over the summer. Your essay should have a clear thesis statement and introduction, followed by two or three body paragraphs that provide evidence of the similarities and differences that you have chosen to point out. That evidence should be in the form of brief quotes or paraphrased material. (Hint: think about how events in the character's life reveal WHO HE OR SHE REALLY IS. Don't just tell us what the character DID; tell us what the character's actions reveal about him or her.) The writing assignment MUST follow these guidelines: **typed, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman with one inch margins all around**. The heading must include your complete name and the date.

The Writing Assignment and Summer Reading Log will be collected during the first week of classes.

Reading List: Choose at least ONE of your three books for Part 2 from this list of fiction and nonfiction titles.

I Capture the Castle (Dodie Smith) Absolutely charming story of the Mortmain family's struggles in their decrepit castle in England, narrated by Cassandra. Opening line: "I write this sitting in the kitchen sink." How can you resist a book that starts with a line like that?

The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie (Alan Bradley) Murder mystery with an unusual protagonist – the 11-year-old Flavia de Luce. If you like it, there are a number of terrific sequels.

Little Women (Louisa May Alcott) Story of four sisters coming of age; one of the best-known novels of all time and loved by generations of girls and women.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (Betty Smith) Francie Nolan is one of the most beloved characters in all of fiction. If you live in Brooklyn, you owe it to yourself to read this one!

Tell the Wolves I'm Home (Carol Rifka Brunt) Moving story of a 15-year-old girl dealing with an uncle suffering from AIDS in the 1980s.

The Good Thief(Hannah Tinti) Ren, an orphan with one hand is joined by “orphans, grave robbers, scam artists, drunks and assorted freaks” as he searches for the truth about his own life.

The Fellowship of the Ring(J.R.R. Tolkien) This the first book in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Challenging, but one of the greatest fantasy novels ever.

To Kill a Mockingbird (Harper Lee) Widely considered one of the greatest American novels of all time. If you haven't read it already, what are you waiting for?

A Tale of Two Cities (Charles Dickens) Challenging, yes, but oh-so-worth-it in the end! You may never get over Sydney Carton.

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet (Jamie Ford) A Chinese-American boy and a Japanese-American girl meet during the difficult days of World War II.

Murder on the Orient Express(Agatha Christie) A classic whodunit by the master herself.

Mr Midshipman Hornblower (C.S. Forester) This is the first in the Horatio Hornblower series. If you like ships and sailing and dashing young heroes, this is the book for you.

Here are a few NONFICTION choices if you prefer:

All Creatures Great and Small(James Herriott) Funny, wacky, touching stories as seen through the eyes of an English veterinarian.

I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban(Malala Yousafzai)When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. When she was fifteen, she was shot in the head while riding the bus home from school. Luckily, she survived, and continues to be an advocate for education for girls

Diary of a Young Girl(Anne Frank) Anne Frank's diary of her family's time in Holland, hiding from the Nazis.

Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer (James L. Swanson) The search for John Wilkes Booth after that fateful night at Ford's Theater.

The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia (Candace Fleming) If you think history is boring, this book will change your mind.

The Borden Murders: Lizzie Borden and the Trial of the Century (Sarah Miller) True-crime story of one of the most famous trials in US history.

Wheels of Change: How Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom (With a Few Flat Tires Along the Way) (Sue Macy) The story of the bicycle's role in helping women achieve the right to vote and other freedoms.

St. Vincent Ferrer High School English Department
Summer Reading Log

Directions: For each book that you read this summer, fill in the information below.

Note: The first book on the list must be one of the three Part 1 choices: *I Capture the Castle*, *The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie*, or *The Book Thief*. At least ONE more of the books on your list must come from the list we have provided. The remaining books can be chosen by you.

Title Author Started Reading (Date) Finished Reading (Date)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

(If you need more space, continue on another sheet and staple it to this one.)

I pledge my honor that I read all of the books listed above.

Student Signature

Print Student Name

Parent Signature