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A C A D E M Y

Summer 2025 Reading Challenge
Independent Reading (IR) Summer Reading Packet (for incoming Grade 8 students)

NAME: _____ Grade: _____

Overview

To prepare for ELA in Grade 8, you are required to independently read two books during the summer: One of the books is a required read. The second book you get to choose from a list of options provided in the *IR Summer Reading Packet*. Of course, you may read as many books this summer as you can...and we hope you do! One of the best ways to prepare for the upcoming year is to set aside time to read every day.

For those of you who wish to push beyond the two assigned reading challenges, we ask that you track the books that you read on the *Independent Reading (IR) Tracker Worksheet*. See the last page of *IR Summer Reading Packet*. Even if you start and book and don't finish it, add the book to the IR Tracker. Every page you read is an investment in developing your reading and writing skills.

We are looking forward to working with you next year, and we can't wait to learn about the books and authors you discovered. Meanwhile, have a wonderful summer...and don't forget to read everyday!

Summer Reading Independent Reading Challenge: Here's What You Need to Do

1. Required Book 1: Read *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch
 - a. *As you read the book, complete the Reading for Understanding (RFU) Worksheet on the following pages. Taking notes while or right after you read is a great habit that will help you make sense of what's going on in the book. Writing as you read also helps you remember what happened in the story later on.*
 - b. *There will be a written assignment on the Pausch book when you return to school in September. Details will be provided by your ELA teacher during the first week of school.*

2. Required Book II: Select and Read ONE of the Books from *Your Choice Booklist* (See below.)
 - a. *As you read the *Your Choice* book, complete the corresponding Reading for Understanding (RFU) Worksheet for the book you selected too.*
 - b. *There will be an assigned project and a presentation on the book you chose to read when you return to school. Details will be provided during the first week of school.*

Book II: Your Choice: Select a book you'd like to read from the list below:

Fiction	Non-fiction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The Red Kayak</i>, Patricia Cummings - <i>Life of Pi</i>, Yann Martel - <i>Down River</i>, Will Hobbs - <i>Chronicles of Narnia</i> (Book 1 of 7), C.S. Lewis - <i>When Zachary Beaver Came to Town</i>, Kimberly Willis Holt - <i>Blood River</i>, Elisa Carbone - <i>The Witch at Blackbird Pond</i>, Elizabeth George Speare - <i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>, Wilson Rawls - <i>Project 1065</i>, Alan Gratz - <i>Heat</i>, Mike Lupica - <i>Sign of the Beaver</i>, Elizabeth George Speare - <i>Ranger's Apprentice</i> (Book 1 of 12), John Flanagan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Boys in Boat</i>, by Daniel Brown - <i>Finest Hours</i>, by Casey Sherman & Michael J. Tougias - <i>The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind</i>, William Kamkwamba - <i>The Plot to Kill Hitler</i>, Patricia McCormick - <i>The Essential Wooden: Lifetime Lessons on Leadership</i>, John Wooden - <i>Chasing Lincoln's Killer</i>, James Swanson - <i>Endurance</i> by Alfred Lansing

3. For Any Additional Books You Read. Update the Independent Reading (IR) Inventory Tracker to keep a running record of the books you read this summer. (See the last page of this packet.)

The turning point (climax) in the story was when...

At the end of the story...

What about the book struck you most? Think about how the book surprised you or elicited an emotional reaction or got you thinking about something that you weren't considering when you started reading the book.

Review: Did you enjoy this book? Discuss what you liked about the book. Also, include comments (if any) about elements of the book you did not like or could have been improved upon.

Would you recommend this book to a friend? Explain why or why not.

When you have completed reading *The Last Lecture* and RFU Worksheet I, please sign below.

Student signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Reading for Understanding (RFU) Worksheet II: **YOUR CHOICE**

Remember, more is better. You should be writing in complete sentences, and in your own words. A complete sentence includes starting with a capital letter, using appropriate grade level vocabulary, and ending with a punctuation mark. Using paragraphs to separate information is a good way to keep your details in an organized fashion.

REQUIRED BOOK:	Genre:	Book Length (pages):
Author:	Grade Level: 6-8	Completed / Attempted (circle one)

My understanding of the book was... Excellent Mostly understood it Somewhat understood it

What was the main theme or message of the book? What message or lesson do you think the author was trying to convey to readers? (Support your ideas with details from the story.)

Identify and describe the setting of the story. Where and when did the story take place?

The turning point (climax) in the story was when...

At the end of the story...

What about the book struck you most? Think about how the book surprised you or elicited an emotional reaction or got you thinking about something that you weren't considering when you started reading the book.

Review: Did you enjoy this book? Discuss what you liked about the book. Also, include comments (if any) about elements of the book you did not like or could have been improved upon.

Would you recommend this book to a friend? Explain why or why not.

When you have completed reading *Your Choice Book* and RFU WORKSHEET II, please sign below.

Student signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent signature: _____ **Date:** _____

