8th Grade Summer Work List - 2017

Your summer reading will include two books and an independent writing project. All the assignments are due the first day you return in September.

First:

All rising 8th graders are to read ***The Red Badge of Courage*** by Stephen Crane. Here is some information from amazon.com about the novel:

“*First published in 1895, this small masterpiece set the pattern for the treatment of war in modern fiction. The novel is told through the eyes of Henry Fleming, a young soldier caught up in an unnamed Civil War battle who is motivated not by the unselfish heroism of conventional war stories, but by fear, cowardice, and finally, egotism. However, in his struggle to find reality amid the nightmarish chaos of war, the young soldier also discovers courage, humility, and perhaps, wisdom.*”

*The Red Badge of Courage* is a classic historical novel. It tells the story of the Civil War through the eyes of a complex and not entirely likable young man. After enlisting, his romantic visions of war and purpose meet grim realities. The author, Stephen Crane, was never a soldier and wrote the book while in his early 20’s, before dying in 1900 at the age of 28.

In a paragraph (4-6 sentences) each, please address two of the following questions about the novel:

1. Consider the advice Henry’s mother gives him in the first chapter. Do you think Henry’s opinion of her advice changed as the book progressed?
2. The title of the book refers to the injury Henry receives in Chapter 12. Discuss the irony of his wound, how he got it, and the impact it had on him.
3. This book shows a clear divide between the *army* and its *soldiers*. Describe the complaints the soldiers have about their leaders and the army in general.
4. Henry changes significantly over the course of the battle. Is he more or less admirable as a person by the end of the book? Explain your thinking.

These paragraphs should be typed (double-spaced) or written neatly with skipped lines. They may be emailed at any time during the summer to mfoley@greenestreetfriends.org. Otherwise they are due the first day back in September.

Second:

You will choose one novel or work of non-fiction. This book should be appropriate to your age, interest and reading ability. To provide evidence of your completion of the books, you will make a brief verbal presentation to the class that demonstrates your understanding of it.

For the presentation, you will select one of the elements of the book (plot, character, setting or theme) and explain how the story element is represented in the book. You will have 1-3 minutes to give your presentation. We will do the presentations the first week of school.

Third:

This I Believe