

Incoming Grade 9

It is the belief of the Weston school system that summer reading provides many benefits for our students, including the development of effective reading habits and reflective thinking. All Weston students will be asked to read over the summer. In grades 6 through 12, there will be one required title, with a strong suggestion of at least two additional titles and a Supplementary Reading List is supplied which will support the exploration of this grade's theme for the year.

GRADE 9: SUMMER READING

Grade Level Theme: Belief Structures

Unit 1 Concept: Family

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Standard – *THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN* – Sherman Alexie

Honors – *THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES* – Sue Monk Kidd

There will be assessments on the summer reading.

ENGLISH 9 STANDARD ASSIGNMENT:

1. **Purchase and read** *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. *Note: You must be sure to view the cartoons in the book! These are parts of the text and can be “read” for meaning in the same way you read the prose in the book.*
2. **Make notes on plot events and characters as you read the book.** Your teacher will expect to see your notes on the first day of class and you can use these notes to help you study for the Reading Check Test which will be given the first week of school.
3. **Annotate** the first three chapters (pages 1-23). This will help you read more actively and develop a deeper understanding of what the author is trying to say. When you annotate, you should both underline or highlight a portion of the text and comment on it in the margin of the page. Your annotations should focus on the following:
 - A. Character traits
 - B. Author's craft (imagery, symbol, metaphor, tone, connotation)—try to move beyond identifying examples of these things; make a note of why Alexie uses each one.
 - C. Themes (please keep in mind that a theme is a phrase, not a single word; RIGHT: “appearance vs. reality,” WRONG: “love”)
 - D. Conflict
4. Choose **one of the cartoons in the book**, and **type a single paragraph** (at least ½ page in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt. font) in which you explain **why** Alexie decided to include that particular visual aid. What choices has Arnold Spirit made in that cartoon, and how does it enhance our understanding of **Arnold himself**? *This must be your own work! It will receive a grade for content and mechanics, so make sure it represents your best work. You should include **at least two quotations** from the text to support the points you make. Be sure to review your Language Arts writing notes from eighth grade when you prepare to write this paragraph.*
5. On the first day of class, your teacher will be reviewing your annotations so that he/she can follow the thought processes you went through as you read. You should have (on average) approximately **four or five** annotations per page.
6. **Within the first few days of class, you will take a Reading Check test** on the book requiring you to identify key passages and discuss how they relate to character, plot, conflict and theme.

ENGLISH 9 HONORS ASSIGNMENT:

1. **Purchase the required text.**
2. **Read the book.** . Take notes to help you keep track of characters and plot events
3. **Annotate** the first two chapters of *The Secret Life of Bees*. Annotating will help you read more actively and develop a deeper understanding of what the author is trying to say. Your annotations should focus on the following categories:
 - A. Character traits
 - B. Author's craft (imagery, symbol, metaphor, tone, connotation)
 - C. Themes
 - D. Conflict
 - E. Foreshadowing
4. In a well-developed paragraph (strong topic sentence, effective transitions, smoothly embedded quotations) of 300-350 words (double-spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman) analyze the following passage from *The Secret Life of Bees* which occurs shortly after Lily enters the general store in Tiburon. How does the specific detail presented by the author help us to understand more about Lily and the significance of this moment? Be sure to account for as many of the passage details/images as you can and, when appropriate, draw connections to the entire novel. Remember this is a paragraph of analysis not plot summary.

The door opened, and a family came in fresh from church, the mother and daughter dressed alike in navy with white Peter Pan collars. Light streamed in the door, hazy, warped, blurred with drizzles of yellow. The little girl sneezed, and her mother said, "Come here, let's wipe your nose."

I looked again at the honey jars, at the amber lights swimming inside them and made myself breathe slowly. (63)
5. On the first day of class, your teacher will be reviewing your annotations so that he/she can follow the thought processes you went through as you read. Your paragraph will also be reviewed and evaluated.
6. Within the first few days of class, you will take a test on the book you read requiring you to identify key passages and discuss how they relate to character, plot, conflict and theme.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST (Gr. 9) *These books will support and enrich your understanding of the Grade Level Theme. Please select 2 additional books to read. You are not limited to this list.*

The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation – M. T. Anderson

In this fascinating and eye-opening Revolution-era novel, Octavian, a black youth raised in a Boston household of radical philosophers, is given an excellent classical education. He and his mother, an African princess, are kept isolated on the estate, and only as he grows older does he realize that while he is well dressed and well fed, he is indeed a captive being used by his guardians as part of an experiment to determine the intellectual acuity of Africans. The issues of slavery and human rights, racism, free will, the causes of war, and one person's struggle to define himself are highly relevant and Anderson's use of factual information to convey the time and place is powerfully done..

Foundation – Isaac Asimov

Foundation marks the first of a series of tales set so far in the future that Earth is all but forgotten by humans who live throughout the galaxy. Yet all is not well with the Galactic Empire. Its vast size is crippling to it. The only person willing to confront this imminent catastrophe is Hari Seldon, a psychohistorian and mathematician. The Foundation Trilogy won a Hugo Award in 1965 for "Best All-Time Series." It's science fiction on the grand scale; one of the classics of the field written by America's most prolific writer

Little Boys Come from the Stars – Emmanuel Dongala

Precocious and mischievous Matapari--a nickname that means "problem child"--comes of age in a time of tumultuous change in his small Congolese town. Matapari's often hilarious first-person narrative affords an honest look at the maneuverings and corruption of adults--revealed particularly through their conversations with children. About halfway through, the book veers onto an extended political track, when the government erupts into turmoil. A wiser Matapari begins to understand the contradictions of the adult world when new, "democratic" candidates campaign in his town.

***Lost Horizon* – James Hilton**

This classic story of a group of people who survive an airplane crash in Tibet and find shelter at a mysterious monastery is extremely well known, but unlike most novels, it is less about the situation of the characters than it is about their thoughts and ideas. The novel is elegantly and simply written and possesses tremendous atmosphere

***The Moon is Down* - John Steinbeck.**

In an unnamed country (similar to Norway) during World War II, a German sympathizer lures local men and the town's twelve soldiers into the forest long enough for the Germans to take the town. They occupy the home of the mayor as a sign of their power and commandeer the local coal mine. Mayor Orden has never before been a brave or very forceful man, but he is not a fool, and while he tries to keep order in the town, as the Germans demand, he refuses to use the power of his office to betray the ideals of his people. Soon the locals begin to sabotage everything the Germans can use to prolong the war. Simple, direct, concise, and humane, this may be the most effective piece of mass propaganda ever written.

***The Peacock Spring* – Rumer Godden**

This is a wonderful book by master storyteller Rumer Godden. It is the riveting and sensuous story of a young girl who goes to live with her father, an English diplomat, in New Delhi. Una Gwithiam, a very intelligent teenager who did not want to leave her boarding school in England, is lonely and feeling unloved since she realizes that her father only wanted her to come to Delhi to be tutored by a beautiful Eurasian woman, to whom he is attracted. When Una meets Ravi, an extremely attractive young Indian man who works in her father's garden, she learns that he is not only well educated but also a celebrated poet. Their developing relationship brings much anguish, but also maturity.

***The River* – Rumer Godden**

Harriet is between two worlds. Her sister is no longer a playmate, her brother is still a child. The comforting rhythm of her Indian childhood - the noise of the jute works, the colourful festivals that accompany each season and the eternal ebb and flow of the river on its journey to the Bay of Bengal - is about to be shattered. She must learn how to reconcile the jagged edges of the beginnings of adulthood and the ending of childhood and its effect on family. Made into one of the first great classic color films by Jean Renoir.

***Jellicoe Road* – Melina Marchetta**

In this absorbing story set in an Australian boarding school, nothing is as it seems and every clue leads to more questions as sixteen-year old Taylor tries to work out the connection between her mother dumping her when she was eleven, Hannah finding her and a mysterious stranger who seems to know a lot about her. If Taylor can put together the pieces of her past, she might just be able to change her future.

***The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie* – Alan Lacey**

It's the beginning of a lazy summer in 1950 at the sleepy English village of Bishop's Lacey. Up at the great house of Buckshaw, aspiring chemist Flavia de Luce passes the time tinkering in the laboratory she's inherited from her deceased mother and an eccentric great uncle. When Flavia discovers a murdered stranger in the cucumber patch outside her bedroom window early one morning, she decides to leave aside her flasks and Bunsen burners to solve the crime herself, much to the chagrin of the local authorities. But who can blame her? What else does an eleven-year-old science prodigy have to do when left to her own devices? With her widowed father and two older sisters far too preoccupied with their own pursuits and passions—stamp collecting, adventure novels, and boys respectively—Flavia takes off on her trusty bicycle Gladys to catch a murderer. As the pages fly by, you'll be rooting for this curious combination of Harriet the Spy and Sherlock Holmes. Go ahead, take a bite.!(Lauren Nemroff)

***The Forgotten Garden* – Kate Morton**

Like Frances Hodgson Burnett's beloved classic *The Secret Garden*, Kate Morton's *The Forgotten Garden* takes root in your imagination and grows into something enchanting--from a little girl with no memories, left alone on a ship to Australia, to a fog-soaked London river bend where orphans comfort themselves with stories of Jack the Ripper, to a Cornish sea heaving against wind-whipped cliffs, crowned by an airless manor house where an overgrown hedge maze ends in the walled garden of a cottage left to rot. This hidden bit of earth revives barren hearts, while the mysterious Author's fairy tales (every bit as magical and sinister as Grimm's) whisper truths and ignite the imaginary lives of children. A saga, a mystery, a story of the multiple faces of family.