2019 Grade 9 Honors Genre Studies Summer Reading Assignment

Incoming 9th grade Honors Genre Studies students are required to read two books this summer. Honors students must choose a Non-Fiction book on this list and answer three questions below. Each response should embody 1-2 fully developed paragraphs, including specific details and cited textual evidence. Your typed responses will be submitted to turnitin.com during the first full week of school. A printed hard copy is also due for reference during a Socratic Seminar scheduled for the first week of school.

1. What happens in the book? Identify what the author discusses in each chapter or section of the book. Discuss some of the significant episodes or incidents that occur in the story.

2. Who are the most important characters? Identify the protagonist/antagonist. Write down important information and characteristics about each one.

3. What kinds of conflicts does the plot contain or the characters do encounter? (Character vs. Character, Character vs. Self, Character vs. Nature, Character vs. Supernatural, Character vs. Society, Character vs. Technology). Explain in detail how these conflicts affect the characters.

4. Where does the story take place? Provide specific information about the place, time, and social context of the book. How is the setting important?

5. What are some of the important symbols in the book? What kinds of objects does the author describe frequently?

6. Identify any other noteworthy literary techniques (satire, tone, flashback, foreshadowing, etc.) that the author utilizes. Explain their significance in the book.

7. What is the significance of the title of the book?

8. What is the author’s theme or message? What is he/she trying to tell you by writing this book?

Choosing Passages from the Text:
Look for quotes that seem significant, thought provoking, or puzzling and mark them with Post-Its or highlight them in the book. For example, you might record:
- Effective and/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices
- Structural shifts or turns in the plot
- A passage that makes you realize something you hadn’t seen before
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols or motifs
- Events you find surprising or confusing
- Passages that illustrate a particular character or setting

If you find a long passage that moves you, don’t hesitate to use it. You’ll have the page number to easily locate it later.
Boots on the Ground: America's War in Vietnam by Elizabeth Partridge
It's the personal stories of eight people—six American soldiers, one American military nurse, and one Vietnamese refugee—that create the heartbeat of Boots on the Ground. From dense jungles and terrifying firefights to chaotic helicopter rescues and harrowing escapes, each individual experience reveals a different facet of the war and moves us forward in time. Alternating with these chapters are profiles of key American leaders and events, reminding us of all that was happening at home during the war, including peace protests, presidential scandals, and veterans' struggles to acclimate to life after Vietnam.

All Souls: A Family Story from Southie by Michael Patrick MacDonald
A breakaway bestseller since its first printing, All Souls takes us deep into Michael Patrick MacDonald's Southie, the proudly insular neighborhood with the highest concentration of white poverty in America. Rocked by Whitey Bulger's crime schemes and busing riots, MacDonald's Southie is populated by sharply hewn characters like his Ma, a mini skirted, accordion-playing single mother who endures the deaths of four of her eleven children. Nearly suffocated by his grief and his community's code of silence, MacDonald tells his family story here with gritty but moving honesty.

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah
This is how wars are fought now: by children, hopped-up on drugs and wielding AK-47s. Children have become soldiers of choice. In the more than fifty conflicts going on worldwide, it is estimated that there are some 300,000 child soldiers. Ishmael Beah used to be one of them. What is war like through the eyes of a child soldier? How does one become a killer? How does one stop? Child soldiers have been profiled by journalists, and novelists have struggled to imagine their lives. But until now, there has not been a first-person account from someone who came through this and survived.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by William Kamkwamba
William Kamkwamba was born in Malawi, a country where magic ruled and modern science was mystery. It was also a land withered by drought and hunger. But William had read about windmills, and he dreamed of building one that would bring to his small village a set of luxuries that only 2 percent of Malawians could enjoy: electricity and running water. His neighbors called him misala—crazy—but William refused to let go of his dreams. With a small pile of once-forgotten science textbooks; some scrap metal, tractor parts, and bicycle halves; and an armory of curiosity and determination, he embarked on a daring plan to forge an unlikely contraption and small miracle that would change the lives around him.

Chinese Cinderella: The True Story of an Unwanted Daughter by Adeline Yen Mah
In Chinese Cinderella, Adeline Yen Mah returns to her roots to tell the story of her painful childhood and her ultimate triumph and courage in the face of despair. Adeline's affluent, powerful family considers her bad luck after her mother dies giving birth to her. Life does not get any easier when her father remarries. She and her siblings are subjected to the disdain of her stepmother, while her stepbrother and stepsister are spoiled. Although Adeline wins prizes at school, they are not enough to compensate for what she really yearns for -- the love and understanding of her family.

Burn Down the Ground: A Memoir by Kambri Crews
In this powerful, affecting, and unflinching memoir, a daughter looks back on her unconventional childhood with deaf parents in rural Texas while trying to reconcile it to her present life—one in which her father is serving a twenty-year sentence in a maximum-security prison.
The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brow
It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington’s eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenage without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world.

A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail by Bill Bryson
The Appalachian Trail stretches from Georgia to Maine and covers some of the most breathtaking terrain in America—majestic mountains, silent forests, sparkling lakes. If you’re going to take a hike, it’s probably the place to go. And Bill Bryson is surely the most entertaining guide you’ll find. He introduces us to the history and ecology of the trail and to some of the other hardy (or just foolhardy) folks he meets along the way—and a couple of bears. Already a classic, A Walk in the Woods will make you long for the great outdoors (or at least a comfortable chair to sit and read in).

Fierce: How Competing for Myself Changed Everything by Aly Raisman
Discover Aly Raisman's inspiring story of dedication, perseverance, and learning to think positive even in the toughest times on her path to gold medal success in two Olympic Games—and beyond. Aly's road to success was full of hard work, perseverance, and victories, but not without its hardships. Aly faced many obstacles, from naysayers who said she'd never make it in gymnastics to classmates who shamed her for her athletic body to a devastating betrayal of trust. Through it all, Aly surrounded herself with supportive family, friends, and teammates and found the inner strength to remain positive and believe in herself. Now, in her own words, Aly shows what it takes to be a champion on and off the floor, and takes readers on a behind-the-scenes journey before, during, and after her remarkable achievements in two Olympic Games—through her highest highs, lowest lows, and all the moments in between.

Obsessed: A Memoir of My Life with OCD by Allison Britz
Until sophomore year of high school, fifteen-year-old Allison Britz lived a comfortable life in an idyllic town. She was a dedicated student with tons of extracurricular activities, friends, and loving parents at home. But after awakening from a vivid nightmare in which she was diagnosed with brain cancer, she was convinced the dream had been a warning. Allison believed that she must do something to stop the cancer in her dream from becoming a reality. Unable to act “normal,” the once-popular Allison became an outcast. Finally, she allowed herself to ask for help and was diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder. This brave memoir tracks Allison’s descent and ultimately hopeful climb out of the depths.

** As this is a list aimed at high school level students, some of the books address mature ideas and issues. Please preview the books before making your selections so that you are not surprised by the content.
Incoming 9th grade Honors Genre Studies must read this novella and take notes which can be used during an in-class essay exam during the first week of school. As you read Steinbeck’s novella and take notes, keep in mind the following essay prompts. Your notes should include 4-6 quotes that you will use in an essay based on either Prompt A or Prompt B (you choose the prompt). Please write the quotes and page numbers, based on your chosen prompt. Try to comment on literary devices and stay focused on your selected prompt rather than merely summarizing each quote. The goal is to analyze, not summarize!

When considering the concept of the “work as a whole,” it is a good idea to look for the development of character, conflict, and theme in the novella as you select your quotes. Remember, you are not writing the essay for your summer assignment; you are completing the analysis of 4-6 selected quotes. All work must be original; the main idea is that you must NOT present ideas from another source or classmate as your own.

Select ONE prompt to focus on for your summer note-taking assignment:

**Prompt A:** In great literature, no scene of violence exists for its own sake. Choose a scene from the novella *Of Mice and Men* that confronts the reader with a scene or scenes of violence. In a well-organized essay, explain how the scene or scenes contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole (theme). Avoid plot summary.

**Prompt B:** It has often been said that what we value can be determined only by what we sacrifice. Consider how this statement applies to a character from the novella *Of Mice and Men*. Select a character that has deliberately sacrificed, surrendered, or forfeited something in a way that highlights that character’s values. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the particular sacrifice illuminates the character’s values and provides a deeper understanding of the meaning of the work as a whole (theme). Avoid plot summary.