

Seventh Grade Summer Reading

Your reading goal for the summer should be to read, read, read. Keep reading. As much as possible, read.

Along the way, you will read two books in preparation for our class. Please read carefully as both books will be used for class discussion and assignments in the early weeks of school. One will be the book everyone reads—*The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros. And the other will be your choice of one out of the six titles below. Please have a physical copy of *The House on Mango Street* (ISBN: 978-0-679-73477-2), and have either a copy or e-book of your choice book.

Everybody Reads:

The House on Mango Street—“Acclaimed by critics, beloved by readers of all ages, taught everywhere from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country, and translated all over the world, *The House on Mango Street* is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero. Told in a series of vignettes – sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous – it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.” (back cover)
These linked stories work together to create a panoramic view of Esperanza and her home and neighborhood.

For your assignment, choose three vignettes to focus on. You will take three pictures and write your own memories relating to each photo. BUT each of these must relate to a story from the novel in some way as well. *The first day of class, you will turn in three pages, each with your name, a two-sentence italicized introduction that tells how this memory links to one of the chapters, a photo you take this summer, and your memory.*

- The *introductions* should include a specific quote from each story you choose, as well as how that quote made you think of the memory you are writing about.
- The *memory* itself should be typed (12 point, Times New Roman or comparable font) and double-spaced. It should be at least a ½ page, and no more than a page. The memories should be your best writing about a moment in your life (from this summer or another time) and should connect to the *photo* you include. *Please include each memory’s description, significance, and photo connections* (if you do not wish your writing to be interrupted by the photo connection, you can instead have a caption by the photo which explains the connection).

Choice Book:

Choose one of the following books to read in addition to *The House on Mango Street*. During your reading, write **two informal journal entries** (hand-written or typed). One should be written when you are half-way through the reading, and one at the end. These can be discussing the book itself—a character or a conflict—or they can be about something in life—a person you know who is experiencing a similar conflict or a current event that reminds you of the book. In addition, the entries could instead be your own imaginative story that might parallel the book. You have a lot of freedom with these two entries. The only requirement is that you are clear about the connection to the book and that they be at

least $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page each (hand-written) or $\frac{1}{2}$ page double-space (typed). The questions and journal entries are due the first day of class.

Christi, Agatha. *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Detective extraordinaire Hercule Poirot never refuses an interesting case—but his services are certainly not for sale. When Mr. Ratchett approaches him in the dining-car, he spurns the American's generous offer. But when Ratchett is found dead the next morning, Poirot responds with eagerness. One thing is for sure—with the train trapped in a heavy Balkan snowdrift, the killer cannot escape.

Korman, Gordon. *Masterminds*.

Serenity, New Mexico, is an idyllic community for all its inhabitants. Everyone has everything they need and no one lies. As the local newspaper boasts, "Serenity Voted #1 in USA for standard of living." Eli has always been happy with his life and never had any reason to want to leave ... [until] Eli and a few friends begin to uncover secrets and discover that honesty may not be at the heart of Serenity. ... Korman has created a fun and creative story that delves into the philosophy of what makes us human and whether or not we are defined by our circumstances. (From *School Library Journal*)

Na, An. *A Step from Heaven*.

In her mesmerizing first novel, Na traces the life of Korean-born Young Ju from the age of four through her teenage years, wrapping up her story just a few weeks before she leaves for college. The journey Na chronicles, in Young's graceful and resonant voice, is an acculturation process that is at times wrenching, at times triumphant and consistently absorbing. (From *Publishers' Weekly*)

Staples, Suzanne. *Under the Persimmon Tree*.

In the mountains of northern Afghanistan after 9/11, Najmah watches in horror as the brutal Taliban kidnap her father and older brother. ... When her mother and baby brother die in an American air raid, she ... makes a perilous journey to a refugee camp in Pakistan. In a parallel narrative, Nusrat... has set up a rough school for the refugees. ... The two stories come together when Najmah and Nusrat meet [at the school], where they wait in anguish for news of the people they love. (From American Library Association)

Taylor, Theodore. *The Weirdo*.

"Weirdo" is the insulting nickname the townsfolk give Chip Clewt, a 17-year-old boy who had been badly burned in an airplane crash.... Now assisting a graduate student observe and tag bears in the [Powhatan] swamp in order to protect them, he has aroused the tempers of local hunters. Samantha Sanders, the 16-year-old daughter of one of the most vocal opponents of the hunting ban, meets Chip when she follows a prize hunting dog into the swamp... A strong friendship develops as the two lonely teenagers solve a murder while lobbying for animal rights. (From *School Library Journal*)

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*.

Like every other hobbit, Bilbo Baggins likes nothing better than a quiet evening in his snug hole in the ground, dining on a sumptuous dinner in front of a fire. But when a wandering wizard captivates him with tales of the unknown, Bilbo becomes restless. Soon he joins the wizard's band of homeless dwarves in search of giant spiders, savage wolves, and other dangers. Bilbo quickly tires of the quest for adventure and longs for the security of his familiar home. But before he can return to his life of comfort, he must face the greatest threat of all - a treasure-troving dragon named Smaug. (From Amazon.com)