



8th Grade Guide to Summer Reading 2008-2009

Both summer and core reading books have been established in various subjects for each grade level. The purpose of the summer reading program is to promote the love of reading, to enrich the curriculum, and to prepare students for the literature they will be studying in the upcoming school year.

Literature: Students entering the 8th grade read: *Beyond the Burning Time* by Kathryn Lasky, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, tells the story of young girl's struggle to survive in the Massachusetts Colony of 1692. It is a tale set against the backdrop of false accusations, economic hardships and misunderstandings, providing a historical perspective of America's past.

AS YOU READ THIS STORY

1. Underline passages in the book that you believe are important to understanding the plot, possible themes, symbols, and character development.
2. Complete a **webquest** for the novel that you have chosen:
 - a. Go to Chaminade Middle School's English Department Website.
 - b. Click on 8th Grade Summer Reading.
 - c. Choose the webquest for *Beyond the Burning Time*.
 - Follow the directions on the webquest.
 - Your webquest newspaper should be single-spaced, typed, and have the correct heading.

WHEN SCHOOL BEGINS

1. Be prepared to turn in your completed webquest assignment at the end of the first week of school.
2. Be prepared to discuss the novel when you return to school in August.

Social Studies: The novel *Fever* by Laurie Halse Anderson takes place in the city of Philadelphia. It is late summer and the streets are abuzz with mosquitoes and rumors of fever. Many citizens have become ill and some have died from the disease. Mattie Cook's life is greatly impacted by the events of that summer. She loses friends and loved ones and is forced to struggle and build a new life for herself.

AS YOU READ THIS STORY

Please choose three of the discussion questions below. Answer them thoroughly, each in a separate paragraph. (3 paragraphs total) Then, choose one activity from the list to include with your questions. This assignment should be typed—double spaced using Times New Roman, and 12 point font. Be prepared to turn this completed assignment in to your teacher at the beginning of the second class meeting after school starts.

Discussion Questions

1. What was Philadelphia like in 1793? What were the advantages and disadvantages of living in the countryside outside of Philadelphia?
2. How was the life of a 14-year-old in 1793 different from the life of a 14-year-old today? In which period would you rather live? Why?
3. What are the greatest advancements American society has made since then? How have we regressed?
4. Mattie's grandfather didn't think there was any need to rush out of Philadelphia when the fever started to spread. Why did some people think it was safe to stay? What would you have done?
5. The color yellow is used throughout the story. What does it symbolize? What other symbols are used in the book?
6. When does Mattie move from being a child to being a young adult?
7. What do you think will happen to Mattie, her mother, and friends in 1794? What will their lives look like in 1800? In 1813?
8. During the Revolutionary War, women took on tasks that were traditionally performed by men. After the War, they were expected to go back to their spinning wheels and kitchens. How are Mattie's dreams in conflict with what her society expected of young women? Why did Mattie's mother want a different life for her daughter?

Supporting Activities – Please choose one only, NOT one from each category.

Category 1. History

1. Mattie was born in 1776. Make a timeline of Mattie's life and the life of the United States up to that time.
2. Philadelphia was home to the largest population of free African-Americans in the United States. Research how escaped slaves made their way to Philadelphia. When did these routes become the Underground Railroad? Make a multimedia presentation using music from the late 1700s.

Category 2. Language Arts

1. Rewrite a scene from Eliza's point of view.
2. Make a list of words they used in 1793 that we don't use today, such as "balderdash" and "bunkum." What words that we use today might sound strange and old-fashioned in the year 2200?
3. Write a newspaper article that Andrew Brown could run in the Federal Gazette.

Category 3. Science

1. Research the work of Dr. Walter Reed. How do mosquitoes spread yellow fever? What other diseases do mosquitoes spread? Why aren't all diseases spread this way?
2. What diseases cause epidemics today in the United States? What about other parts of the world?
3. How would doctors and scientists respond today if a mysterious disease started to spread through a major American city?

Category 4. Multimedia

1. Write a screenplay for your favorite scenes from the book. Present it to the class.
2. Write a graphic novel for your favorite scene from the book.

WHEN SCHOOL BEGINS

Be prepared to:

1. Compare and contrast the author's description of city life with historical reality
2. Discuss the medical practices of the time
3. Compare and contrast the author's perception of social classes with the reality of the late 18th century
4. Discuss your reaction to the role that African Americans played during the epidemic

Religion:

Stand Tall a Joan Bauer novel gives us a peek into the life of a six-foot-three-inch twelve year old boy who is dealing with his parents' recent divorce and his failure as an athlete. Tree learns to cope with all that is going on in his life by helping his grandfather, a Vietnam vet, and Sophie, a new girl at school.

AS YOU READ THE STORY

Select five questions below in which to respond. Answer the questions in five to eight sentence paragraphs. This assignment should be typed—double spaced using Times New Roman, and 12 point font. Be prepared to turn this completed assignment in to your teacher shortly after school begins.

1. Describe something in your life right now that is causing you to grow deeper roots.
2. Tree's nickname is hard for him in the beginning, but he learns good things from it, too. What does he learn?
3. Do you think Tree sees his height as a disability? Why? How do you think he feels about his lack of athletic ability?
4. Tree is a big help to Grandpa in his recovery. What did you learn about Tree from the way he helps? What did you learn about Grandpa?
5. Tree reaches out to Sophie when she is being picked on because he knows what it is like to be teased. Have you ever done that for someone or had someone do that for you?
6. What does Sophie's motto, "Speak your mind and ride a fast horse" mean? How does that fit her?

7. Tree thinks up a motto for himself and one for the dinosaurs. What are they? Do they fit?
8. Divorce is different for every family. How does Sophie's family deal with divorce compared to Tree's family?
9. What are some of the battles that the characters in Stand Tall are fighting?
10. What does Tree find worth restoring in the sewage and muck of the basement?
11. How does restoring his brothers' awards help Larry and Curtis? How does it help Tree?

WHEN SCHOOL BEGINS

1. Be prepared to discuss the book and respond to the questions and topics above.