

~2021 Summer Reading~

- 1) Pick **two books** that you'd like to read this summer. They should be books that you haven't read before (not rereads), and they should be at your reading level (even though *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is hilarious, try to pick something a bit harder).
- 2) Email me what two books you'd like to read by **Friday, June 11, 2021**. If you are a 6th grader or new student, please add a sentence or two in your email telling me a little about yourself – perhaps share your favorite books, movies, TV shows, Youtube channels, sports, video games, etc! My email is w.hsieh@oldorchardschool.com.
- 3) Please write **two book letters** (see below).
- 4) Book letters can be written and sent anytime during the summer; they are due by the first day of school.

Book letters:

* aim for about 1 to 1.5 pages, double-spaced

* things you can write about in your letter: what did you like or didn't like about the book? who is your favorite or least favorite character? are there any quotes or scenes that stand out to you? what could the author have changed, added, or taken out? would you recommend it to a friend? how would you rate it out of 10?

* see sample book letter format and example letters on the following pages (feel free to tweak this format if you like, as long as each paragraph flows logically)

* you can email the book letter to any of your classmates and cc me in your email, print out paper copies, or email me directly

If you're not sure which books to pick, take a look at the [California Young Reader Medal list](#) or the [Goodreads YA list](#). Amazon.com and your local library bookshelves are also good places to look. :)

I can't wait to hear about your books... Read on!

~ Ms. H

Sample Book Letter Format

Paragraph 1: State the book title and author. Provide a brief summary of the story: Where and when is the story set? Who is/are the main character(s)? What is the main conflict of the story?

Paragraph 2: Describe how you felt after reading the book. Did you feel excited? Confused? Bored? Meh? Explain why: mention two or three scenes/moments from the book that stood out to you, or a character that stood out to you.

Paragraph 3: Explain whether or not you would recommend the book and who would most likely enjoy it. For example: "I really enjoyed *The Fault in Our Stars*, and I highly recommend it to anyone who enjoys funny, sarcastic teen characters and an emotional, tragic story." Finally, give your rating! 10/10 = one of the best books ever! 1/10 = ughhhhhh -_-

The Mark of Athena

written by Rick Riordan

Lily H

I just finished reading the book *The Mark of Athena*, written by Rick Riordan. *The Mark of Athena* is about a group of demigod kids (Percy, Annabeth, Hazel, Frank, Piper, Jason, and Leo) who journey to the “ancient lands” (Greece and Rome) to stop an uprising of the evil goddess Gea and her giant sons (literally Giants) and minions. Before they left for Greece, they stopped at the other demigod camp to hopefully become allies. Instead, they accidentally ended up firing on the home of the other demigods at that camp, and made the Romans think that they were enemies. Despite all odds piled up against them, the demigod team goes to Greece in their flying warship to stop Gea, find Hazel’s brother Nico, find the Athena Parthenos, and stop Gea.

I thought the book was really exciting. I think it could have been my favorite of the three books I've read so far! I can't wait to find out what happens next. I'm actually kind of dying. The whole book characters fight dangerous monsters (that are usually Gea’s minions) and gods. One of my least favorite of Gea’s minions (and by that I mean “I hate how they attack the demigods and ruin everything) are the eidolons. They are some of Gaea’s most annoying minions. They invaded Jason, Percy, and Leo’s mind to do whatever they could to make the demigods’ quest fail. They were the ones that made Leo fire on the Roman camp, and they also made Percy and Jason fight each other! Finally, Piper and the others find out what is happening and Piper makes them swear on the River Styx never to enter the mind of any of the crew members of the Argo II (their flying warship). What Piper didn't realize is that that meant they could still enter the minds of other people and attack them using those other random people, which is exactly what happens. This book made me hate imaginary monsters!

One of my favorite parts of the book is about Annabeth’s journey to find the Athena Parthenos. Annabeth is my favorite character along with Percy, maybe just because they're the originals, but I find them the most relatable of the 7. Annabeth was commanded by her mother Athena to find the statue and it is a task that was told to many children of Athena, but all had fallen short. Even though this part was one of my favorite adventures of the book, I still was not completely satisfied. When it said that there was a room filled with plastic swords and I think rope, or some kind of material she could weave into rope, I already guessed that she would use them to make a ladder that she would use to climb down into the hole, and even having her have the rope or material she could use to make a rope, I think was too easy. Also, even though it talks about how she broke her leg and had all of these terrible things happen, plus having her use her brain to solve many problems, and having her stand up against her fear, spiders, even though it sounds like a lot, really seemed like not enough to me. I would have liked it a lot more if it had gone on for longer with more tasks and challenges because it really didn't seem like that much. I didn't understand how the other children of Athena could not have made it to Arachne’s lair. I understand not being able to beat Arachne because she is a formidable foe, but I don't know how they could have not made it to her lair. I know I'm probably being a critic but I just wished it would have gone on for longer!

I thought the ending was great and infuriating at the same time! I would recommend this book to everyone who loves action, adventure, comedy, a little bit of Greek and Roman history, combat, and just a little bit of romance, but make sure to read all of the other books in the series first! I would rate this book a ten out of ten!

The Maze Runner

This break I reread *The Maze Runner* for the first time in a while, and I was able to remember just why I liked it so much back when it came out. First off, the book begins very well. There isn't really any sort of "it all started when" or anything like that. It cuts straight to the chase, with the protagonist Thomas being lifted who-knows-where in a dark elevator, with no memory of his previous life. He then arrives in the Glade, an odd haven inhabited completely by teenagers. He learns about the Glade, and the Maze surrounding it, and throughout the story, he strives to solve the Maze, something the rest of the Gladers have deemed unsolvable.

One of my favorite aspects of this book is the characters. They aren't just one-sided, and everyone has their own motives for finishing the Maze. The leader of the Glade, for instance, wants to solve the Maze in honor of all of the Gladers who have died trying. Thomas thinks it is his purpose to do it, though he doesn't quite know why he feels this way. This is revealed later in the book, and the end nicely wraps up all questions raised throughout while also providing a cliffhanger for the next book.

Another thing I liked were the many different story elements introduced throughout the book. One of my favorite is the Grief Serum, used to heal someone who was stung by the monsters who inhabit the Maze, the Grievers. The serum makes the person feel terrible pain for about three days, but it seems that it might return some key memories to the people injected with it. Because of this, Thomas lets himself get stung so he can take the serum, and in the end, his returned memories are crucial to solving the Maze.

Overall, *The Maze Runner* seems to be a very well-thought-out book. I liked it a lot when I was younger, and it is still very enjoyable to read now.