

Edgar Middle School
Language Arts Department

June 2010

Dear Parents and Students,

All Language Arts teachers at Edgar Middle School believe that books enrich and broaden your world. To maintain and develop reading skills over the summer, we request that all students set aside time to read and respond to a novel. Through the extension of reading into the summer months, our students will enhance vocabulary, develop critical thinking skills, and set the “start button” for literary analysis in September.

With summer vacation approaching, we are asking each student to select two books to read during the break. Be sure to select books that you enjoy and that sound interesting, but that are a bit challenging for you. The librarians at the Metuchen Public Library can help you find books that would be a good fit for you.

Students will be expected to complete a response journal where they will identify the major events, make personal connections to the text, and connect the text to other media experiences. The intent of this journal is to assure recall of what was read and to assist students in developing critical understanding of a text. This will be completed in preparation for activities to be completed at the beginning of the school year. Attached, please find a blank copy of the journal to be used for the assignment. Please keep in mind that the space provided is the expectation for the journal. Please keep within these limitations to avoid complication of the assignment.

Because we do not want to limit the students’ reading, each student is encouraged to read books and other reading materials of their choice. The expectation is that each student reads two books, but we would like to know what else each student is reading throughout the summer. Other reading materials may include other fiction books, biographies, nonfiction titles, newspapers, magazines, weblogs, wikis, and other online materials. Attached to this sheet, you will find a reading log, where you may record the other books and/or reading material that you have read over the summer.

The two summer reading response journal entries and the choice reading log should be submitted to the student’s language arts teacher on **Tuesday, September 14, 2010.**

Enjoy reading this summer! We look forward to thoughtful discussions upon your return.

Sincerely,

Kathryn A. Glutz
Principal

Edward C. Porowski
Supervisor of English/Social Studies

Edgar Middle School
Language Arts Teachers

SAMPLE**Book Synopsis**

Write a bulleted sequence of events for the book that you read. (Don't get caught up in every little detail – try to get 12-15 events total.)

- Jeffrey Magee runs away from his Aunt and Uncle's house and ends up in Two Mills.
- Maniac borrows a book from Amanda Beale, eats with the Pickwells, and hits a homerun with a frog.
- Jeffrey receives the nickname, Maniac.
- Maniac is chased by McNab and the Cobras. Maniac meets Mars Bar and takes a bite of his candy bar. In return, Mars Bar rips a page of the book Maniac borrowed from Amanda.
- Maniac lives with the Beales for a while.
- Maniac does a lot of different things with the Beales, but he also deals with people's prejudices because he is white.
- Maniac unties Cobble's Knot.
- Maniac runs away and begins living in the buffalo pen at the Zoo.
- Maniac becomes good friends with Grayson. Grayson takes care of Maniac, and Maniac teaches Grayson to read.
- Grayson dies, and Maniac runs away again.
- Maniac lives with the McNabs, and takes care of John's little brothers.
- Maniac runs away again.
- Maniac and Mars Bar run into each other and save Russell McNab on the trestle.
- Maniac and Mars Bar help to rid Two Mills of prejudice.
- Maniac ends up living with the Beales, and now has a home.

Movie, TV Show, or Book Connection

Choose a movie, television show, or book that reminds you of something that you read within this book. Write a bulleted list of connections.

Movie/TV/Book Title: Forrest Gump

- Forrest Gump loves to run everywhere, just like Maniac
- Forrest Gump and his friend Bubba remind me of the relationship between both Maniac and Mars Bar and Maniac and Grayson.
- Forrest Gump and Maniac Magee both are part reality, legend, and tall-tale.

Personal Connections

What did you find in the book that relates to you? Bullet a list of connections between the book and yourself.

- I connected to Maniac because I would do anything to help out a person in trouble.
- I love to spend time with my little brother and teach him how to read different letters and words, in the same way that Maniac likes to teach Grayson how to read.
- I felt really bad for Maniac because he kept running away from any place that he could consider a home. I would have acted like Amanda Beale and her family, and welcomed him to live with my family.

BONUS: Music Connection

Is there a song that you know that could represent a major theme or idea presented within your book? Identify the song and bullet any connections you make between the song and the book.

Song Title: Because of You by Kelly Clarkson

- I think this song reminds me of how Maniac might have felt about being stuck in the middle of the constant arguments between his Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan. This song demonstrates why he may have decided to run away from them.

Book Synopsis

Write a bulleted sequence of events for the book that you read. (Don't get caught up in every little detail – try to get 12-15 events total.)

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Movie/TV/Book Title: _____

Personal Connections

What did you find in the book that relates to you? Bullet a list of connections between the book and yourself.

BONUS: Music Connection

Is there a song that you know that could represent a major theme or idea presented within your book? Identify the song and bullet any connections you make between the song and the book.

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