June 3, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

If you are new to Crefeld, welcome to the Middle School!

Summer is here, and I hope that you are already encouraging your children to put their time to good use by reading a book! When they finish their current reads, please have your child read the **required reading:** *If I Ever Get Out of Here* by Eric Gansworth. **Additionally, students must also choose another book from the summer reading list below.**

Students should review the list and pick a book that looks interesting to him/her. The books range in content, genre, length, and reading level. Most, if not all, of these books will be on-hand at the larger bookstores, as well as online, and students are encouraged to browse the books before making their final selections. Also, please consider supporting a Black-owned local bookstore like Uncle Bobbie’s Books in Germantown or Harriet’s Bookshop in Philadelphia.

Also, the list will soon be posted on The Crefeld School website for your convenience. Who knows—perhaps you’ll read one as well! Enjoy your summer!

Please feel free to email me with any questions at ngreaves@crefeld.org.

Sincerely,

*Nicole Greaves*

Nicole Greaves
Middle School English Teacher
Summer Reading List
Middle School Reading List Instructions

Here is our first assignment for the 2021-2022 school year: Read and select and read a book from the following list.

Make sure you finish the books before the beginning of the school year. Early in the semester, you will be assessed on If I Ever Get Out of Here by Eric Gansworth and students will also complete a follow-up project based on the second book.

Book Description

Lewis "Shoe" Blake is used to the joys and difficulties of life on the Tuscarora Indian reservation in 1975: the joking, the Fireball games, the snow blowing through his roof. What he's not used to is white people being nice to him - people like George Haddonfield, whose family recently moved to town with the Air Force. As the boys connect through their mutual passion for music, especially the Beatles, Lewis has to lie more and more to hide the reality of his family's poverty from George. He also has to deal with the vicious Evan Reininger, who makes Lewis the special target of his wrath. But when everyone else is on Evan's side, how can he be defeated? And if George finds out the truth about Lewis's home, will he still be his friend? Acclaimed adult author Eric Gansworth makes his YA debut with this wry and powerful novel about friendship, memory, and the joy of rock 'n' roll. (Scholastic.com)
Choices for Second Book  (Select a book you haven't read before)

* Very accessible reading level

** More of a reach for the 7th and 8th grade reader

No asterisk means that the book was written for the middle school reading level

The Hate You Give  -  Angie Thomas
Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil’s name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.
But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.  (Book jacket)

** The Curious Incident of a Dog in the Nighttime -  Mark Haddon
The fifteen-year-old narrator of this ostensible murder mystery is even more emotionally remote than the typical crime-fiction shamus: he is autistic, prone to fall silent for weeks at a time and unable to imagine the interior lives of others. This might seem a serious handicap for a detective, but when Christopher stumbles on the dead body of his neighbor's poodle, impaled by a pitchfork, he decides to investigate. Christopher understands dogs, whose moods are as circumscribed as his own ("happy, sad, cross and concentrating"), but he's deaf to the nuances of people, and doesn't realize until too late that the clues point toward his own house and a more devastating mystery. This original and affecting novel is a triumph of empathy; whether describing Christopher's favorite dream (of a virus depopulating the planet) or his vision of the universe collapsing in a thunder of stars, the author makes his hero's severely limited world a thrilling place to be.  Copyright © 2005 The New Yorker

The Lost Years of Merlin –  T. A. Barron
Washed up on the shores of ancient Wales, the boy had no home, no memory, and no name.... He was determined to find all three. Under the wing of the mysterious Branwen, who claims to be his mother, the nameless boy learns the lore of such ancient peoples as the Celts and the Druids. But to discover his identity and the secret of his own powers, he must escape to the mist-shrouded isle of Fincayra, an enchanted land between earth and sky that is being destroyed by blight. With this land's inhabitants to guide him, the boy will learn that Fincayra's fate and his own quest are strangely intertwined.... He is destined to become the greatest wizard of all time.
History will name him Merlin. (Publisher's comments)

**Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind** (Newbery Honor Book) – Suzanne Fisher Staples
Life is both sweet and cruel to strong-willed young Shabanu, whose home is the windswept Cholistan Desert of Pakistan. The second daughter in a family with no sons, she's been allowed freedoms forbidden to most Muslim girls. But when a tragic encounter with a wealthy and powerful landowner ruins the marriage plans of her older sister, Shabanu is called upon to sacrifice everything she's dreamed of. Should she do what is necessary to uphold her family's honor or listen to the stirrings of her own heart? (Publisher's comments)

**A Mango-Shaped Space** – Wendy Mass
Thirteen-year-old Mia Winchell appears to be a typical eighth grader. But Mia is keeping a secret from everyone who knows her: sounds, numbers and words appear in color for her. Mia has synesthesia, the mingling of perceptions whereby a person can see sounds, smell colors, or taste shapes. A Mango-Shaped Space is a poignant, coming-of-age novel spiced with wit and humor that chronicles Mia's developing appreciation of her gift and the part it plays in her life. (Book Jacket)

**After Tupac & D Foster** (Newbery Honor Book) – Jaqueline Woodson
When D Foster enters Neeka's and her best friend's lives, their world opens up. D's the kind of girl that's been places and attracts attention. Before long the three are inseparable, bonded by a passion for the music of Tupac Shakur. Then, all too soon, D's mom swoops in to reclaim D—and as magically as she appeared, she disappears from their lives. Tupac is gone, too, after another shooting—this time fatal. And the girls are left to ponder how even the briefest connections can touch so deeply. (Book jacket)

* **Hatchet** – Gary Paulson (Newbery Honor Book) Brian Robertson, sole passenger on a Cessna 406, is on his way to visit his father when the tiny bush plane crashes in the Canadian wilderness. With nothing but his clothing, a tattered windbreaker, and the hatchet his mother had given him as a present, Brian finds himself completely alone. Challenged by his fear and despair—and plagued with the weight of a dreadful secret he's been keeping since his parent's divorce—Brian must tame his inner demons in order to survive. It will take all his know-how and determination, and more courage than he knew he possessed. (Book jacket)

**Anything but Typical** – Nora Raleigh Baskin
Jason Blake is an autistic 12-year-old living in a neurotypical world. Most days it's just a matter of time before something goes wrong. But Jason finds a glimmer of understanding when he comes across PhoenixBird, who posts stories to the same online site as he does. Jason can be himself when he writes and he thinks that PhoneixBird-her name is Rebecca-could be his first real friend. But as desperate as Jason is to meet her, he's terrified that if they do meet, Rebecca wil only see his autism and not who Jason really is. By acclaimed writer Nora Raleigh Baskin, this is the breathtaking depiction of an autistic boy's struggles and a story for anyone who has ever worried about fitting in. (Book jacket)
**Ender's Game** (Winner of the Nebula and Hugo Awards) – Orson Scott Card

_Intense_ is the word for _Ender's Game_. Aliens have attacked Earth twice and almost destroyed the human species. To make sure humans win the next encounter, the world government has taken to breeding military geniuses—and then training them in the arts of war.... The early training, not surprisingly, takes the form of “games.”... Ender Wiggin is a genius among geniuses; he wins all the games.... He is smart enough to know that time is running out. But is he smart enough to save the planet? (*New York Times*)

_Escape! The Story of The Great Houdini_ – Sid Fleischman

How did he walk through walls, escape drowning, and shatter iron chains that were tightly wrapped around him? The rare photos in this book might help you figure it out. So might the exclusive update about the rumor that Houdini was poisoned. But just remember, a true magician never reveals his tricks . . . (Book jacket)

**PET** - Akwaeke Emezi (Stonewall Book Winner and Walter Dean Myers Honor Book)

There are no more monsters anymore, or so the children in the city of Lucille are taught. With doting parents and a best friend named Redemption, Jam has grown up with this lesson all her life. But when she meets Pet, a creature made of horns and colours and claws, who emerges from one of her mother's paintings and a drop of Jam's blood, she must reconsider what she's been told. Pet has come to hunt a monster, and the shadow of something grim lurks in Redemption's house. Jam must fight not only to protect her best friend, but also to uncover the truth, and the answer to the question — How do you save the world from monsters if no one will admit they exist? (Book jacket)

_How to Interact with the Text_

• Circle new characters.

• Underline moments you find interesting or important in the story. A few items per chapter is a good guideline.

• At the end of a chapter, write 2-3 bullet points of important plot points that occurred in that chapter.

• This skill is called annotating and it is something you will be doing more of this year. It helps you remember the book and will be used to start conversations about the book when you return.