

Western Academy 2024 Summer Reading Assignment

Entering Eighth

The Summer Reading Assignment is designed to cultivate a love of reading among our students and prepare them for the fall academic culture at Western Academy. The books, stories and poems have been carefully selected to foster an enjoyable and thoughtful reading experience. The memorized poetry and completed readings are due the first day of school. The first weeks of school will include discussion and work on the summer reading and poetry.

Here are the steps to complete this assignment successfully.

~ **Read** all assigned books, stories, and poems.

~ **Memorize** the poem to recite for the first week of school. Practice reciting it to your family.

Suggestions for enjoyable completion of summer work:

~ Read (or have a parent read) some of the stories aloud (unabridged audio books can also be used) while the student reads along with his book. Read the poem aloud at dinner and discuss!

~ Set up a schedule early in the summer (for example: 30 minutes of reading every day before lunch).

~ Take notes after reading so you are ready for the summer reading assignments upon returning to school in the fall.

Books:

- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (Science Fiction); ISBN 9781451673319
- *Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain (Historical Fiction); ISBN 9780898702682

Poem:

Digging by Seamus Heaney

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked,
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

(poem continued)

By God, the old man could handle a spade.
Just like his old man.

My grandfather cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, going down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mold, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

Other suggested reading:

1776 by David McCullough (History, Non-fiction); ISBN 9780743226721
Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati by Maria Di Lorenzo (Biography); ISBN 9780819811622
The Black Arrow by Robert Louis Stevenson (Adventure Fiction); ISBN 9780141441399
Journey to the Center of the Earth by Jules Verne (Science Fiction); ISBN 9780451532152
The Greatest Knight by Thomas Asbridge; ISBN 9780062262066
The Tale of Troy by Roger Lancelyn Green; ISBN 9780141341965
Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand (Young Adult Adaptation); ISBN 9780385742528
A Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula K. Le Guin (Fantasy/Fiction); ISBN 9780547773742

Other suggested poems:

“The Sycamore” by Wendell Berry
“The Mending” Wall by Robert Frost