

## Western Academy 2023 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; ISBN 9781451673319
- *Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain; 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