

Name: _____

Date: _____



Rising 6s Summer Reading
Maniac Magee

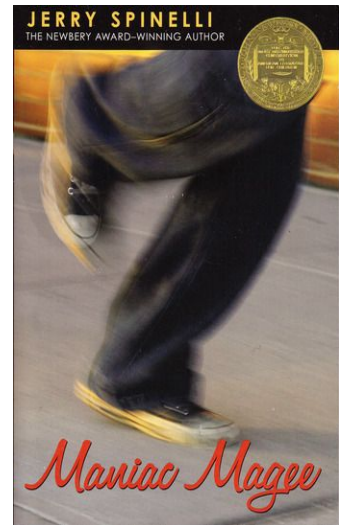
Summer Reading

Required Reading: *Maniac Magee*

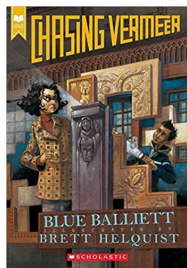
This summer, you get to read *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli. It's a book about love, fear, home, baseball, prejudice and understanding. It's a great book that we hope you'll enjoy.

While you read, please use sticky notes and keep track of your favorite quotations, your questions, and your comments. Or, you can feel free to write directly in this book because it is yours.

After you're finished reading, you will need to complete what we call a Letter Essay. The specifics of the letter are described on the back of this sheet, paragraph-by-paragraph. This is a letter, so write it in that form, starting with "Dear Humanities Teacher," and then closing by signing your name at the end. Please type or neatly handwrite this letter, and be ready to turn it in on the first day of school.



Honors Reading: *Chasing Vermeer*



The honors reading book this summer is *Chasing Vermeer*. This is a well-written mystery book—an unforgettable story.

Chasing Vermeer (2004) by Blue Balliett, an American children's author, follows two Chicago-area teenagers as they fight to recover a stolen, famous painting by 17th century Dutch artist Johannes Vermeer. Brett Helquist, who also illustrated *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket, illustrated *Chasing Vermeer*. In addition to becoming a bestseller, the novel won the 2005 Edgar Award, the top honor for a children's mystery book. Balliett, a sixth grade teacher, wrote the book to present her students with an entertaining text that took on substantial and current issues in the art world.

When a book of unexplainable occurrences brings Petra and Calder together, strange things start to happen: Seemingly unrelated events connect; an eccentric old woman seeks their company; an invaluable Vermeer painting disappears. Before they know it, the two find themselves at the center of an international art scandal, where no one is spared from suspicion. As Petra and Calder are drawn clue by clue into a mysterious labyrinth, they must draw on their powers of intuition, their problem solving skills, and their knowledge of Vermeer. Can they decipher a crime that has stumped even the FBI?

Letter Essay Instructions

Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself and who you are as a reader. Your description could include: the number and type of books you've read this year, your favorite book, what you love or hate about reading, who your favorite author is, or your favorite storybook to listen to as a child. Don't feel like you need to write about each of these in your description, but do your best to describe who you are as a reader to your Humanities teacher.

Paragraph 2: Introduce the book, *Maniac Magee*, and write a brief summary of the it. Introduce the characters, setting, and what the main problem is (conflict). A great summary quickly retells the main points in a way that engages the reader, so as a writer you need to stick to the most important points in order to provide a preview for your reader. Please summarize the text in ten sentences or less.

Paragraph 3: In this paragraph talk about the writing of the book (the form). Give an example of text that you love from the book (that means find a quote from your book and put it into this paragraph). Comment on why you chose this quote. Tell what is good or bad about it. Point out what the author has done that made you want to continue to read. The quote needs to be significant, and you need to be able to explain why you like the text that you chose.

Paragraph 4: Tell what genre this book is, and give it a rating. Explain why you have rated it as you did and who you would or wouldn't recommend it to.

Paragraph 5: In this paragraph, name and describe the theme of this book. Theme is the big idea or main message in the story (ex. overcoming challenges, love, perseverance, hope, growing up, identity, culture, prejudice, poverty, choices, good and evil). Theme is not the author's purpose or the topic of the text. Theme isn't intended to teach or preach—usually it is not presented directly at all. Theme is what we, as readers, begin to think about when we put together what the characters do, say, and think in a book. In this paragraph, you need to name both the theme, and support it with specific textual evidence, elaborating on your ideas.



CCSC

Letter Essay Rubric

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Below is the rubric that your teacher will use when he or she grades your letter essay. Please read through this before you start to write so you know what is expected of you.

	4: Advanced	3: Proficient	2: Developing	1: Emerging
Demonstration of Text Understanding	Show multi-dimensional understanding of text	Shows adequate understanding of text	Shows some understanding of text	Shows no understanding of text
Voice/Personality	Uniquely expressed and interesting to read	Contains few interesting parts	Mostly dull	Trite + empty
Clarity of Expression	Uses language very effectively to communicate ideas	Uses language adequately to communicate ideas	Shows some difficulty using language to communicate ideas	Is unable to use language effectively to communicate ideas
Use of Conventions (CUPS)	Uses conventions accurately so response is easily understood	Uses adequate conventions so response is mostly understood	Uses a few conventions so parts of response are understood	Uses almost no conventions so writing is difficult to read and understand
Awareness of Self as Reader and Writer	Shows high level of awareness of self as reader and/or writer	Shows adequate awareness of self as a reader and/or writer	Shows little awareness of self as a reader and/or writer	Shows no awareness of self as a reader and/or writer