



Humanities Department Grade 8

Academic Year 2019-2020

CCSC Summer Reading Assignment – 8th Grade

Introduction: Community Charter School of Cambridge requires all students to complete summer reading in preparation for the upcoming academic year. This reading is mandatory and we ask that all families get copies of the required books and encourage students to start reading early in the summer. In all cases, a graded assessment will be given first thing next fall to determine students' understanding of the material. Please use the following list to determine which books your child must read. Note, in some cases, a writing component will be attached.

Keys to Success:

- ❖ **Purchase the necessary book or books early, preferably before this school year ends** – The books will be available for purchase on a first come, first served basis at CCSC for a cost of \$5.00 per book during Roundtable Presentations.
- ❖ **Mark up the books with comments and questions as you read (Annotations)** – Writing in the books themselves, if you own them, will help your reading comprehension. Use a notebook or post-its if the books are borrowed.
- ❖ **Review the material the week before school starts** – Review the reading and your notes in order to prepare for the quiz that will be given on the book ***in the first few days of school.***
- ❖ **Read more than just the assigned books!** – Research shows that students who read more during the summer do better in school and remember their reading skills far better than students who read less or don't read at all. Become a reading machine this summer!

Rising 8th Graders will read:

- *The Alchemist*, by Paulo Coelho
- *Honors: Ender's Game*, by Orson Scott Card

Parents and Guardians: Please help your son or daughter to complete their summer reading.

- Provide a quiet place for them to read and write.
- Ask often during the summer how the reading and the written assignments are going.
- Don't let them wait until the week before school starts!—that is too late to do a good job on this assignment.
- If your son or daughter uses a library book to complete the reading and written assignment, make sure they renew the book and bring it to school with them in the fall when we return.

8th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Summer Reading Expectations:

- a) This summer, all students entering the 8th grade need to read *The Alchemist*, by Paulo Coelho, a powerful story about a young boy from Spain who goes on a journey through Egypt in search of treasure buried in the pyramids.
- b) Students are also *strongly* encouraged to read the honors book, *Ender's Game*, by Orson Scott Card, in which Ender, a very talented child, must join an international space fleet to save the Earth from alien invaders.
- c) In addition, all students must write a lengthy letter-essay. The details are on the next page. It is due on the first day of school, and no late work will be accepted. This is your chance to start off the year with an A!
- d) Students are also strongly encouraged to read *at least* a book a week to keep their “reading muscles” in shape for the fall. Students who read additional books will be given raffle tickets for each extra book they read and will have the opportunity to win prizes in the fall such as magazine subscriptions, books, and restaurant gift certificates. Use the attached reading log to track the books you read this summer.

Note: Students cannot receive higher than a 90% (A-) for the summer reading assignment unless they read the honors book, *Ender's Game*. They don't need to do an extra piece of writing on this honors book, but if they read it, they should be ready to have a brief chat with their teacher about the book during the first week of school.

In Summary

- Read *The Alchemist*.
- Write a 5 paragraph Essay about *The Alchemist*.
- Read *Ender's Game* (optional, but **STRONGLY** encouraged)
- Read at least one book of your choosing each week this summer.
- Contact Ms. Luis for suggestions or help finding books.
HYPERLINK "mailto:dluis@ccscambridge.org" dluis@ccscambridge.org or
HYPERLINK "mailto:bpost@ccscambridge.org" bpost@ccscambridge.org

Essay Instructions:

- All students must write an essay about the required summer book, *The Alchemist*.
- The essay is formatted like a personal letter written to your humanities teacher, but it is meant to be deep and thoughtful like a longer essay for school.
- Each of the **five** paragraphs should be **at least** 5-8 sentences long.
- Type your letter in Times New Roman, Size 12.
- Use the guidelines below for writing each paragraph of your letter.

Dear Humanities Teacher,

1. Summary

- Introduce the main characters, setting (where/when it takes place), and major plot points (what happens in *The Alchemist*).*
- Make sure you talk about what happens in the beginning, middle, and end—not just one part of *The Alchemist*.*

2. Character Change

- Describe one specific way that one of the characters changes over the course of *The Alchemist*.*
- Make sure to use details from the beginning, middle, and end of the text.*

3. Theme

- What are you taking away from *The Alchemist* in terms of its morals or lessons?*
- Think about the big ideas of *The Alchemist*—such as family, disability, appearance, morality, adolescence, bullying etc.—and what the book has you thinking about these.*
- Pick one or two of these ideas and reflect on it deeply rather than trying to hit on every big idea in *The Alchemist*.*

4. Personal Connection

- Which part of *The Alchemist* did you love the most? Which part of *The Alchemist* did you connect the most with?*
- Give an example of an actual piece of text that you liked. It should be at least one sentence and no more than three. Copy it directly from the text and put it in between quotation marks: “ ”*
- Then, explain why you chose this particular piece of text and why it makes you want to keep reading the story.*

5. Just You

- What should your teacher know about you and your family?*
- How would your family describe you as a person? What are some of your interests, including what colleges have you thought about? What type of profession do you want when you are older?*
- Don't forget to include your favorite type of music and song choice of the year.*

Sincerely,

[Your name]

