



## 7th Grade Summer Reading Assignments

Greetings, Rising 7th Graders!

We are very excited to welcome you to seventh grade at Highlands and look forward to working with you in language arts and humanities. In addition to the books you choose to read over the summer, you will need to secure your own copies of the titles below (links to Amazon), read them, and complete the writing assignments before school begins.

### Required:

- [Darius the Great Is Not Okay](#), realistic fiction by Adib Khorram

### Synopsis:

Darius Kellner speaks better Klingon than Farsi, and he knows more about Hobbit social cues than Persian ones. He's a Fractional Persian—half, his mom's side—and his first-ever trip to Iran is about to change his life. Darius never really fit in at home, and he's sure things are going to be the same in Iran. Then Darius meets Sohrab, the boy next door, and everything changes. Soon, they're spending their days together, playing soccer, eating faludeh, and talking for hours on a secret rooftop overlooking the city's skyline. Sohrab calls him Darioush—the original Persian version of his name—and Darius has never felt more like himself than he does now.

- [The Odyssey](#), graphic edition by Gareth Hinds (and Homer)

### Synopsis:

Fresh from his triumphs in the Trojan War, Odysseus, King of Ithaca, wants nothing more than to return home to his family. Instead, he offends the sea god, Poseidon, who dooms him to years of shipwreck and wandering. Battling man-eating monsters, violent storms, and the supernatural seductions of sirens and sorceresses, Odysseus will need all his strength and cunning—and a little help from Mount Olympus—to make his way home and seize his kingdom from the schemers who seek to wed his queen and usurp his throne. Award-winning graphic artist Gareth Hinds masterfully reinterprets a story of heroism, adventure, and high action that has been told and retold for more than 2,500 years—though never quite like this.

- ["Everyday Use,"](#) short story by Alice Walker

### Synopsis:

This short story is told in first-person by "Mama," an African-American woman living in the 1970s Deep South with one of her two daughters. The story follows the differences between Mrs. Johnson and her shy younger daughter Maggie, who both still adhere to traditional Black culture in the rural South, and her educated, worldly daughter, Dee, or "Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo" as she prefers to be called, who takes a different path to establish her cultural identity.

## **Required: Writing About the Literature**

For both books and the short story, type a well developed paragraph in a Google Doc where you describe the main character's central conflict and the solution(s) they find. Use at least **three direct quotes** from the text in each paragraph. Be sure to **include the author's last name and page number** of each quote in parentheses: (Khorram 237).

Your **three paragraphs** will be due the first week of school and should give us an idea of your finest writing.

## **(Optional) For Challenge & Enrichment in Humanities**

Jared Diamond's [\*Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies\*](#) offers an alternative view of history and is written on a twelfth grade reading level. It is recommended for students interested in history and who enjoy challenging literature.

### **Synopsis:**

In this "artful, informative, and delightful" (William H. McNeill, *New York Review of Books*) book, Jared Diamond convincingly argues that geographical and environmental factors shaped the modern world. Societies that had a head start in food production advanced beyond the hunter-gatherer stage, and then developed religion--as well as nasty germs and potent weapons of war--and adventure on sea and land to conquer and decimate preliterate cultures. A major advance in our understanding of human societies, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* chronicles the way that the modern world came to be and stunningly dismantles racially based theories of human history. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science, the Rhone-Poulenc Prize, and the Commonwealth club of California's Gold Medal.