



8th Grade Summer Reading Assignments

Greetings, Rising 8th Graders!

We are very excited to welcome you to eighth 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:

- [Animal Farm](#), novel by George Orwell

Synopsis:

A farm is taken over by its overworked, mistreated animals. With flaming idealism and stirring slogans, they set out to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality. Thus the stage is set for one of the most telling satiric fables ever penned—a razor-edged fairy tale for grown-ups that records the evolution from revolution against tyranny to a totalitarianism just as terrible.

- [Stalin: A Wicked History](#), nonfiction by Sean McCollum

Description:

A brief overview of the life of Joseph Stalin; use as a companion to *Animal Farm*.

- [Manga Classics Romeo and Juliet](#), graphic version of Shakespeare's tragedy by Shakespeare, Crystal Chan, and Julien Choy (illustrator)

Description:

Romeo and Juliet is the classic tragedy of western literature. Created by William Shakespeare, it is a tale of two young lovers from Verona, Italy, who defy the wishes of their feuding families, get married, and tragically, end their own lives in the name of love. Their deaths ultimately help the rival families of the Capulets and Montagues find reconciliation. Manga Classics brings an incredible new reading experience with this adaptation of Shakespeare's most popular and frequently performed plays: *Romeo and Juliet*.

- [Ain't Burned All the Bright](#), mixed-media journal reflection on 2020 by Jason Reynolds and Jason Griffin

Description:

Reynolds' poetry and Griffin's art perform a captivating dance on pages of mixed-media collage and emotive reflection on the pronounced threats facing a contemporary Black family.... While grounded in 2020, many of the issues touched on explicitly are very much not over and not even new, making this remarkable work both timely and timeless.

Required: Writing About the Literature

For each book--except *Stalin: A Wicked History*--type a well developed paragraph in a Google Doc where you describe a main character's central conflict and the solution(s) they find. Use at least **three direct quotes** from the books in each paragraph. Be sure to **include the author's last name and page number** in parenthetical documentation: (Orwell 42).

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

Joseph J. Ellis' [*Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*](#) offers an in-depth look at the relationships between the country's founders and is written on a 12th-grade reading level. It is recommended for students interested in history and who enjoy challenging literature.

Synopsis:

In this landmark work of history, the National Book Award-winning author of *American Sphinx* explores how a group of greatly gifted but deeply flawed individuals--Hamilton, Burr, Jefferson, Franklin, Washington, Adams, and Madison--confronted the overwhelming challenges before them to set the course for our nation.