

**Frederica Academy Middle School  
Summer Reading 7th Grade  
Common Read**

Summer reading is an important part of the curriculum in the Frederica Academy Middle School. Not only does it provide us with a common ground on which to stand at the beginning of the school year, it also keeps young minds active and engaged during the summer. This year, students and faculty will be immersed in the incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast in 1942. Firsthand witnesses to these events, like author George Takei, serve as a reminder of the necessity of preserving the lessons learned from this incarceration and the importance of speaking out against injustice.

From Amazon.com:

***A stunning graphic memoir recounting actor/author/activist George Takei's childhood imprisoned within American concentration camps during World War II. Experience the forces that shaped an American icon -- and America itself -- in this gripping tale of courage, country, loyalty, and love.***

*George Takei has captured hearts and minds worldwide with his captivating stage presence and outspoken commitment to equal rights. But long before he braved new frontiers in Star Trek, he woke up as a four-year-old boy to find his own birth country at war with his father's -- and their entire family forced from their home into an uncertain future.*

*In 1942, at the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, every person of Japanese descent on the west coast was rounded up and shipped to one of ten "relocation centers," hundreds or thousands of miles from home, where they would be held for years under armed guard.*

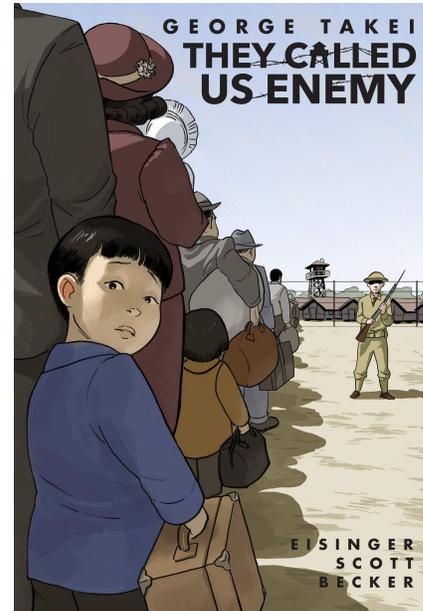
*They Called Us Enemy is Takei's firsthand account of those years behind barbed wire, the joys and terrors of growing up under legalized racism, his mother's hard choices, his father's faith in democracy, and the way those experiences planted the seeds for his astonishing future.*

*What does it mean to be American? Who gets to decide? When the world is against you, what can one person do? To answer these questions, George Takei joins co-writers Justin Eisinger & Steven Scott and artist Harmony Becker for the journey of a lifetime.*

***Winner of the Eisner Award • Winner of the Asian/Pacific American Award for Young Adult Literature***

**Book:** *They Called Us Enemy* (ISBN 978-1-60309-450-4)

**Rationale:** What does it mean to be a U.S. citizen? Citizenship, the rights associated with citizenship, and the having or not having of citizenship are all important issues in *They Called Us Enemy*. In the wake of WWII and the Pearl Harbor bombing, many Americans feared Japanese immigrants; their American citizenship did not matter. As children mature into adolescence and then into adulthood, questions of identity, community, and citizenship grow more and more complicated as students learn about and engage with more of the culture in which they are raised as well as the world around them. Through George Takei's account of his time as an imprisoned Japanese-American, students will explore the concept of citizenship as it relates to the rights people have in the United States, both as citizens and non-citizens.



**Students will discuss *They Called Us Enemy* at the start of the school year. These questions guide your reading and understanding of the text. Assignments and assessments will be given at the discretion of the instructor.**

- How do the authors and illustrators convey the intense emotions of forced relocation? Give an example. Why do you think the authors chose to include so many flash forwards and flashbacks?
- In several scenes, George is depicted speaking to a crowd about his experiences. Do you think it is important to hear first-hand accounts of historical events? Why or why not?
- How does the narration of the adult George Takei compare to George's experiences as a child? How do you think the book would change if the authors just focused on George at one age instead of flashing back and forth in time?
- As a child, how does George view the train ride to Rohwer? How does George's outlook contrast with that of his parents? How does George describe his memory of the train ride? What does he remember most clearly? What is difficult for him to remember? Looking back as an adult, George is aware of the tragic circumstances of the journey. How do memories change as we grow and learn?
- When the family sees their barrack room, George's father tells his mother "Shikata ga nai: or "It can't be helped." Do you agree with this concept? How do you think this attitude might have been helpful to Japanese Americans during incarceration? Do you think it could be harmful? Explain.
- Define "community" in your own words. Why do you think it is so important for Japanese Americans at Rohwer to form a community?
- Consider the following questions from the loyalty questionnaire:
  - Question 27: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty wherever ordered?
  - Question 28: Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?

How would you answer these questions and why? What consequences might you face for your answer?

- George describes interment as an assault not just against Japanese Americans, but against the Constitution. What does this mean? George's father insists that American democracy is the best in the world, even after Japanese American incarceration. Why do you think he feels this way? How does his faith in democracy affect George?
- What do you think was the main theme or themes of the book? How was this theme conveyed? Explain.
- Many Japanese Americans, such as George Takei, see parallels between the experiences of their being stereotyped and the experiences of other groups of people throughout history.
  - Give an example of an occurrence that you have witnessed, experienced, or heard about when an idea was formed about someone based on a stereotype.

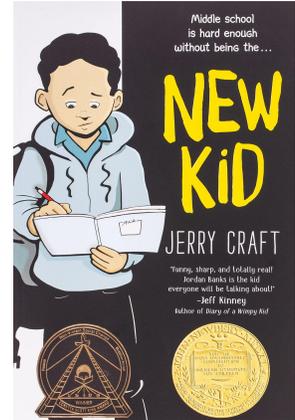
## 7th Grade Summer Reading 2022

### Mandatory 2nd Book

Choose one of the following books that you have *not* previously read to read this summer in addition to *They Called Us Enemy*. Read the novel and be prepared to discuss it during the first weeks of school.

#### **New Kid by Jerry Craft**

*Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?* - Taken From Amazon.com



#### **Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddix**

*In a future where the Population Police enforce the law limiting a family to only two children, Luke, an illegal third child, has lived all his twelve years in isolation and fear on his family's farm in this start to the Shadow Children series from Margaret Peterson Haddix. Luke has never been to school. He's never had a birthday party, or gone to a friend's house for an overnight. In fact, Luke has never had a friend. Luke is one of the shadow children, a third child forbidden by the Population Police. He's lived his entire life in hiding, and now, with a new housing development replacing the woods next to his family's farm, he is no longer even allowed to go outside. Then, one day Luke sees a girl's face in the window of a house where he knows two other children already live. Finally, he's met a shadow child like himself. Jen is willing to risk everything to come out of the shadows -- does Luke dare to become involved in her dangerous plan? Can he afford not to?* - Taken From Amazon.com



#### **Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus by Dusti Bowling**

*Aven Green loves to tell people that she lost her arms in an alligator wrestling match, or a wildfire in Tanzania, but the truth is she was born without them. And when her parents take a job running Stagecoach Pass, a rundown western theme park in Arizona, Aven moves with them across the country knowing that she'll have to answer the question over and over again. Her new life takes an unexpected turn when she bonds with Connor, a classmate who also feels isolated because of his own disability, and they discover a room at Stagecoach Pass that holds bigger secrets than Aven ever could have imagined. It's hard to solve a mystery, help a friend, and face your worst fears. But Aven's about to discover she can do it all . . . even without arms.* - Taken From Amazon.com

