WESTCHESTER
COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Rising Ninth Grade Summer Reading
Summer 2026

General Instructions

1. Read *Endangered* by Eliot Schrefer. The story is told from the point of view of Sophie, who spends the summer living with her mom at a bonobo sanctuary in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While there, Sophie gets caught up in the country's political turmoil, narrowly escaping into the jungle where she must survive on her own.

2. As you read the novel, mark (in the text with a highlighter) passages that speak to you. Be on the lookout for lines that show something about Sophie's growth and development, her relationship with her family, and her struggles to adapt to life in a different country. If you do not have highlighted annotations throughout the book, you will lose points on your overall assignment.

3. After reading, write a well-developed short essay which addresses the following prompt: **How does Sophie "come of age" in this work?** Is there a reason that she grows up? What is it that sparks this character's maturity? Create an essay answering these questions that **total a minimum 500 words**.

This assignment is **due on the first day of school.** Please complete this assignment via a Google Doc with your Westchester account. There will be a Canvas Dropbox available to turn in the assignment the very first day of class.

If you have any questions, please email Mr. Jones (ray.jones@westchestercds.org).

Summer Reading Rubric
Rising Ninth Grade Assignment

Components	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Needs Work (0-2)
Clear Topic Sentence	The topic sentence is clear and sets the paragraph up for in-depth and thoughtful analysis. It is located close to the start (if not at the start) of the paragraph).	The topic sentence is not as clear. It doesn't set things up for in-depth and insightful analysis or does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the character.	The topic sentence is not easy to understand or it is missing. It sets up little analysis or could really be improved.
Supporting Evidence	There are at least two well-explained points regarding how this is a coming-of-age story. Evidence ties into the topic sentence perfectly and there is a logical flow of ideas.	There are two points regarding how this is a coming-of-age story but they could be explained better, or at least one is weak or off-topic. The flow could be slightly illogical.	Some or much of the supporting evidence is missing or very off-topic; it is not clear at all, or the case is not strongly made, regarding how this is a coming-of-age story. Paragraph is poorly organized.
Analysis/Insight	The analysis is in-depth; there is a lot more to the paragraph than just plot summary and the student has put a great deal of thought into their writing. It is clear the student has put a lot of critical thought into the response.	The analysis could be more in-depth and there could be more insight. There is also more plot summary rather than critical thought about the character's growth.	Some, or much of, the supporting evidence is missing or very off-topic; it is not clear at all or the case is not strongly made how the work is a coming-of-age story. There is consistent plot summary rather than explanation.
Editing/Details	The student has clearly taken the time to proofread and the paragraph reveals the student's best work. The student completes the assignment and submits it on time.	There are more than four errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. The student may or may not have submitted the assignment on time.	There are more than eight errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation and those errors deter the reader.