

4th Term Reading Practice

Welcome to the last term you will ever be required to read self-selected books on your own time. Many of you are breathing a huge sigh of relief because you know that after this term you will never read another book besides those specifically assigned by your high school teachers. Although it's sad on many levels, it is the way of our culture; moreover, the quarterly quest for "reading points" that many of you undertake during the last week of every term has grown tiresome. (You know who you are, and so do I.) So, this term we're going to do things differently: no more AR tests, no more book reports, no more pleading, no more games, and no more cheating. Those who read will get points for doing so; those who don't will not. And, best of all, this new method is foolproof. I will know without question who is reading and who is not.

The New Method

I will put "reading points" into the grades twice, once at midterm and once at the end of the term. Points will be based on the conversations you have with me about the book(s) you read. These conversations are called Book Talks. You will not take tests or write reports, and after our Book Talks, I'll know if you've been reading or not. Here is how you will earn your reading points:

- READ.
 - Read every day. Always carry a reading book.
 - Choose books you haven't read before.
 - Choose books that you like and understand.
 - Read in distraction-free zones. (Don't "multitask" when you are reading.)
 - Read enough that you can get into the "flow" of the book.
 - If a book does not interest you after 40 pages, select a different one.
- Schedule a Book Talk.
 - Book Talk #1 must be between these dates: **April 12th and April 23rd**.
 - Book Talk #2 must be between these dates: **May 10th and May 28th**.
 - Schedule a time with me: before/after school, during lunch, or homeroom.
 - *It's important that you schedule it so I know you are coming.*
 - First come, first served.
 - BRING A COPY OF THE BOOK(S). No book, no talk! No excuses!
 - Book Talks will take 5-10 minutes.
- Reading "points" (30 possible) will be assigned based on the following:
 - Your own reading level compared to the difficulty of books you select
 - How much and how often you read
 - Whether or not you are reading books you have not read before
 - Your answers to the questions I ask about your book(s): *See below.*
 - The quality of our conversation
 - As usual, reading points are worth 20% of your term grade.
- Here are some things I will definitely ask during Book Talks:
 - When did you read it? (Have you read it before?)
 - How did you decide to read it? Who recommended it?
 - Will you read other books by this author? Why or why not?
 - What did you like/dislike about the book?
 - What will you read next?

- Here are some of the topics you should be ready to address during Book Talks:
 - Read your favorite passage aloud and tell me why it was your favorite.
 - What other books or stories does this one remind you of? Why?
 - If this book were made into a movie...
 - ...who would be the star? Why?
 - ...what rating (G, PG, PG-13, R) would it receive? Why?
 - ...who would perform the songs for the soundtrack? Why?
 - Identify a theme and explain how it is developed in the book.
 - List five questions you would like me to ask you about this book.
 - Identify something about the book you did not understand.
 - Describe a character in the book that reminds you of someone you know.
 - To whom would you recommend this book? Why?
 - Should this book be taught in class as a “classroom novel” that all the students read? Why or why not?

After our conversation, I will be able to tell whether or not you have been reading regularly or not. For those who do not read, it will no longer be possible to fake it. For those who do read, the conversations will be engaging and fun. Reading is its own reward, and it is good for you, so do it!

Reading Practice Contract

I, _____, have read the new guidelines
 (student's name)
 for Reading Practice, and I agree to read books of my choice (with the approval of my parents) on a regular basis. I will carry a reading book with me at all times, and I will schedule Book Talks with Mr. Thompson during the appropriate weeks of the term. I understand that failure to do so will have a profoundly negative effect on my grade in this class. I understand that any form of cheating in my attempts to earn reading points will result in the loss of all reading points and a poor citizenship grade. I understand that reading is the single most important thing I can do to improve my academic standing, my general intelligence, and my chances for success in school, and I will endeavor to read widely and much in my daily life. I understand that there is nothing Mr. Thompson wants more than for me to become a lifelong reader, and I will try not to let him down in this respect.

Student Signature

Date

Parents: Please sign below to indicate that your student has informed you of the change in the way reading points will be assigned this term in English and that you have discussed with your student his/her reading choices.

Parent Signature

Date