

Millennium Charter Academy's 8th Grade Summer Reading



Required Reading: *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution*

ISBN-10: 0061667714

ISBN-13: 978-0061667718

“In her memoir of growing up in Shanghai during China's Cultural Revolution, Ji-Li Jiang paints a clear and devastating portrait of a brutal political movement that ruined many lives -- and had a deep impact on her own family. The engaging story makes young readers want to know more about the subject.” –Common Sense Media

DIRECTIONS for Written Assignments in English and History:

May be typed or handwritten

- If typed: Please use Times New Roman 12 font and black ink
- If hand-written: Please use black or blue ink on 8.5 x 11 composition paper
- Include your full first and last name in the upper left hand corner of each page.

Each student should demonstrate his or her best writing skills. The grade level expectations are that students should produce clear, meaningful content with very few spelling, grammar, and syntax errors. The final project grade will reflect each student's attention to these areas of writing.

All Parts of the Project for both classes will be due:

English Assignment Due to Mrs. Mitchell:

English Part 1: Keep a reading journal. As you read through the story **choose four chapters** to write about in your journal. The chapters you choose should be meaningful to you and should be taken from different places throughout the novel.

For each chosen chapter, record at least **two** of the connections described below in **complete sentences** in your journal (I have given partial sentences as examples you may follow, but the ideas you record should be your own).

Connection #1: How do you personally relate to the story?

“What I just read reminds me of the time when I was included or excluded . . .”

“When I read about the humiliation Ji Ling experienced at school I could really relate because in my own life . . .”

Connection #2: How do events or themes in the book remind you of other events or themes in other novels, poems, or short stories you have read?

“When Ji Li's friends begin to turn on her because she is a landlord's granddaughter, I am reminded *Animal Farm* by George Orwell because...”

“In some ways, Ji Li's conflict is similar to that of Jonas in *The Giver* by Lois Lowry since they both...”

Connection #3: How do the events and experiences in Ji Li's memoir resemble historical or current events?

“In some ways, the cultural revolution is like what is happening in the United States today because ...”

“Kids today feel political pressure to conform to ideas they are not comfortable with as well. For example, ...”

Separate History Assignment – due to Mr. Cook:

Please follow the individual instructions for the history summer reading assignment. This year the History and English assignments utilize the same book.

We will be studying the history of the world from 1945-1989 with an emphasis on the United States, but part of the story is how we have come to be entangled in the wider world, and what we need to know as a nation and citizens about that world. A central piece of the story is the conflict between freedom and tyranny, democracy and totalitarianism, and Western Civilization and Communism. We will also study the US Constitution and our tradition of individual rights, liberties, and responsibilities. To give us a different perspective and an ability to reflect on those questions this book, *Red Scarf Girl* is very instructive. We will be living the true-life memories of a survivor of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. What happens in a society, where individual rights and liberties, freedoms and family are all made subservient to the whim of a dictator and the state?

Answer the following questions:

1. Why does Ji-Li's family become a target in the Cultural Revolution
2. What changes in her relationships in the neighborhood and at school as the revolution unfolds
3. Why does her family not give in to the pressure put on them by the Red Guards and others?
4. How does she survive life in the countryside?
5. What were the Olds and the Blacks that were seen as so dangerous by the Chinese Communists?
6. Why do you think they were so afraid of the "Olds" and the "Blacks"?
7. What weakness does this reveal about the Communists?
8. Why does Ji-Li not betray her family?
9. In the end her family makes a new life, do you think that is enough after what has happened to them, why or why not?
10. What lessons did you draw from this book, that you can apply to your life or the life of our nation?

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Structure: This book is written as a first person memoir, and as such is based on the real life of the author and her memories and records of those events. It is set in China during the Cultural Revolution (1965-1976). China was already a communist nation, but in many ways still very traditionally Chinese. After all China has a rich culture and heritage that stretches over 4,000 years of human history. Like many families in China during this time, they were supporters of the revolution, the revolution had already taken a tremendous toll on the people of China, but after 150 years of political turmoil, decline, famine, war, and foreign invasion it seemed like a better life was coming into being, in spite of many hardships, sacrifices, and injustices, then the Cultural Revolution brought the nature of totalitarian communism into the lives of those who had previously benefited from it and from those who had already

suffered. Like most children Ji-li Jiang sees her family as normal and part of society, but soon politics will interfere with that view.

These assignments will be the first assignments of the semester, so please start your new school year with a solid grade.

Additional assignments derived from this text, such as a test and/or an essay, may be given during the first week of school.

Please contact Mrs. Mitchell (doramitchell@mcacademy.com) and/or Mr. Cook (ericcook@mcacademy.com) with any questions.

8th Grade Supply List

2020-2021 Eighth Grade Supply List

Binder
Planner
Pencil pouch
8-wide ruled composition notebooks
Notebook paper
Graph paper
Pack of Post-its
1 pack (100) 3x5 index cards
2-dozen pencils (one dozen to keep, and one dozen to give to your homeroom teacher)
Colored pencils
Hand-held pencil sharpener
Calculator (TI-30XIIS–8th grade Math or TI-84 Plus–8th grade Math or Algebra I)
4-pk. of dry erase markers
Clorox wipes (give to your homeroom/2nd period teacher)
Kleenex (give to your homeroom/2nd period teacher)
Hand sanitizer (give to your homeroom/2nd period teacher)

