

6th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to MS 177 Yorkville East Middle School!

In order to start the year and your middle school careers off on the right foot, we ask that all incoming 6th graders complete AT LEAST ONE of the **reading assignments** in Part I below. There are two options.

In addition to the reading assignment, all students should write a **letter of introduction** to their 6th grade teachers (Part II). Specific directions are included on the following pages.

Part I, Option #1: Read The Breadwinner by Deborah Ellis, and complete the assignment below.

Deborah Ellis. *The Breadwinner*.

The Breadwinner brings to life an issue that has recently exploded in the international media — the reality of life under the Taliban. Young Parvana lives with her family in one room of a bombed-out apartment building in Kabul, Afghanistan. Because he has a foreign education, her father is arrested by the Taliban, the religious group that controls the country. Since women cannot appear in public unless covered head to toe, or go to school, or work outside the home, the family becomes increasingly desperate until Parvana conceives a plan. She cuts her hair and disguises herself as a boy to earn money for her family. Parvana's determination to survive is the force that drives this novel set against the backdrop of an intolerable situation brought about by war and religious fanaticism. Deborah Ellis spent several months talking with women and girls in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and Russia. This suspenseful, timely novel is the result of those encounters. Royalties from the sale of *The Breadwinner* will go toward educating Afghan girls in Pakistani refugee camps. "...a potent portrait of life in contemporary Afghanistan, showing that powerful heroines can survive even in the most oppressive ... conditions." — (*Booklist*)

Directions: Read The Breadwinner. (This book is available in libraries and bookstores everywhere.) Be sure to provide examples from the text in each answer. Note the page number on which the example can be found. Then answer the questions below.

Questions for The Breadwinner:

1. What does the setting of The Breadwinner tell you about Afghanistan?
2. How is Kabul changed by the war?
3. How do women's roles in Afghan society change as a result of the Taliban's occupation? What specific effects does the Taliban have on Parvana and her family?
4. Why do you think the author included the part in which Parvana reads the Talib's letter? What does this reveal about Parvana's character?
5. Imagine you are Parvana. Write a diary entry to reflect on your life and your experiences. How has your life changed over the years? What have you learned?

Use this checklist to make sure your answers are complete:

- Handwrite or type your responses on a **separate sheet of paper**.
- Write in **complete sentences**.
- Write your name at the top of your assignment.
- When answering questions 1-4, include evidence and examples from the text.
- Include page numbers at the end of each example for questions 1-4.

-OR-

Part I, Option #2: Read A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park, and complete the assignment below.

Linda Sue Park. A Long Walk to Water.

The *New York Times* bestseller *A Long Walk to Water* begins as two stories, told in alternating sections, about two eleven-year-olds in Sudan, a girl in 2008 and a boy in 1985. The girl, Nya, is fetching water from a pond that is a two hour walk from her home. She makes two trips to the pond every day. The boy, Salva, becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for a safe place to stay. Enduring every hardship from loneliness to attack by armed rebels to contact with killer lions and crocodiles, Salva is a survivor, and his story goes on to intersect with Nya's in an astonishing and moving way. — (Goodreads)

Directions: Read A Long Walk to Water. (This book is available in libraries and bookstores everywhere.) Be sure to provide examples from the text in each answer. Note the page number on which the example can be found. Then answer the questions below.

Questions for A Long Walk to Water:

1. What does the setting of A Long Walk to Water tell you about Sudan?
2. How is Sudan changed by the war?
3. How does the need for water dictate Nya's life? How does the well change this?
4. Why do you think the author writes two stories simultaneously: Nya's and Salva's?
5. Imagine you are either Nya or Salva. Using the author's note at the end of the book as well as the last few chapters, write a diary entry to reflect on your life and your experiences in Sudan. How has your life changed over the years? What have you learned? Be creative!

Use this checklist to make sure your answers are complete:

- Handwrite or type your responses on a **separate sheet of paper**.
- Write in **complete sentences**.
- Write your name at the top of your assignment.
- When answering questions 1-4, include evidence and examples from the text.
- Include page numbers at the end of each example for questions 1-4.

Part II: Write a 4-paragraph letter to your 6th grade teachers telling them about yourself. In your letter, you should discuss:

- Your interests in and outside of school
- Your strengths and weaknesses as a student
- The structures, assignments, or supports your teachers have implemented in the past that have helped make you a more successful student. Think about both settings: learning remotely and in the school building
- Any additional information that you believe your teachers should know about you before the year begins