

## Summer Reading Grade 8

### Overview:

The purpose of summer reading assignments is to support the continued development of reading strategies, writing skills, and critical thinking throughout the summer months. It is especially crucial that these skills be maintained and nurtured this summer following the pandemic to offset any lapses or gaps in learning. Of course, we always hold fast to the hope that our students will also enjoy the experience of reading two books.

### Required Reading:

The Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen

**2nd Book:** Students are to read **one** of the following graphic novels:

Maus - Art Spiegelman

Survivors of the Holocaust - Zane Cunningham & Ryan Jones

A Bag of Marbles - Joseph Joffo Kris Vincent Bailly

Letting It Go - Miriam Katin

A Family Secret - Eric Heuvel

Anne Frank - Sid Jacobsen & Ernie Colon

**Assignment Choices:** The teacher is offering the student a choice of assignments to complete, but it is to be understood that the student will be required to present his/ her project orally to the class upon our return to school.

**TASK 1: Powerpoint** The Devil's Arithmetic is classified as historical fiction. The author, Jane Yolen, uses authentic information about the Holocaust to create a fictional story. Yolen also uses time travel to have her main character Hannah travel

back to Poland during the Holocaust. Hannah then experiences the harsh reality of trying to survive in a German concentration camp. The focus of TASK 1 is to present the authentic information you learned about the Holocaust by reading this book in a **Powerpoint** format. Suggested questions to answer include the following: What did “resettled” mean? How were the Jews transported to the concentration camps? What were the conditions of their trip? What happened when they arrived at the camps? What were the conditions like in the camps? What was the “Choosing?” How did one try to survive in the camps? Minimum 10 slides.

**TASK 2: WRITING Assignment** Write and type up your response to the following prompt. Double spaced, 1 1/2 - 2 pages. Holocaust survivors have united in one central message - REMEMBER! In the very beginning of the book, Hannah is more or less forced to attend the family’s Passover Seder celebration which she resents deeply. As a teen, she is tired of listening to her older relatives remembering. At the end of the book, Hannah’s attitude has changed dramatically. Why? What has Hannah learned? Could this be considered the theme of the book? Why is remembering the Holocaust important? If we do not remember the past, are we bound to repeat it? Do you think there is much to learn from the older generation? Do you really listen to your older relatives when they share their remembrances or do you grow impatient?

**TASK 3: Artistic/ Graphic Assignment** Many teens today enjoy reading graphic novels. The second book you read was just one such novel. If you are artistic, then task 3 is for you. Choose a particular event /time in the storyline of The Devil’s Arithmetic and depict it graphically. This assignment must be done on poster board and have a minimum of 10 varying sized boxes with speech

bubbles in each. The artwork must be neatly done. Stick figures are not acceptable.

**TASK 4: Explore Passover Assignment:** Religious holidays such as Passover or Easter symbolize historic events and involve rituals, traditions, prayers, and specific foods. In the very first event of The Devil's Arithmetic, Hannah is unwillingly attending her family's celebration of the Passover Seder. The author includes some authentic information about the Seder celebration such as hiding the afikoman, eating bitter herbs, and opening the door for Elijah. But there is so much more to learn and share about the Passover meal! Do a bit of research into the following:

What does Passover commemorate?

What foods are included in the meal and what do they symbolize?

What rituals are performed?

Now design/ create a tri board or poster board to display what you learned about Passover. You may depict the historic significance, a prayer or two, rituals, and the traditional Seder plate of food. Some of the food items may be graphically represented, but you must bring in at least one food item to share with the class.

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## SUMMER READING VERIFICATION FORM

Grade 8

My child \_\_\_\_\_ has completed the required reading of The Devil's Arithmetic and has also read one of the second book choices. I also understand that the assignment task will be due the first week of ELA classes.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

