



Long Branch Public Schools

“Where Children Matter Most”



Long Branch High School

2017 Summer Reading

“One School, One Book”

<http://www.longbranch.k12.nj.us>

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Dear High School Parents and Students,

The goal of our summer reading program is to promote literacy beyond our school walls and prevent the "summer slide" in reading that can occur for many students. In the past, our school has offered students a list of potential titles to read during the summer months. However, this year we are trying something new called "One School, One Book." Although "One School, One Book" is new to us at Long Branch High School, it is a concept that has been refined over 15 years across cities and schools throughout the country.

Through this program our aim is to increase literacy, foster a sense of community, and connect the importance of reading to everyday life. With this in mind, all Long Branch High School students will be required to read one nonfiction book, *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah, over the course of the summer. The book provides Beah's firsthand account of his time as a child soldier during the civil war in Sierra Leone and follows his struggle as he transitions to the civilian world, coming to terms with the violence that was an integral part of his life. We believe this powerful memoir offers many valuable life lessons for us all.

In September *A Long Way Gone* will be the basis of discussion and writing in the English Language Arts classrooms. Additionally, throughout the 2017-2018 school year, we are planning several research and service experiences that will be built around the selection and its themes of overcoming adversity and finding redemption. In order to build this community within our school, students must take the first step by reading the selection and completing the summer assignment.

We hope all of you will be as excited about this summer learning opportunity as we are. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Vincent Muscillo

A Long Way Gone Dialectic Journal
Summer Reading Assignment

Dialectic means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” The “dialectic” was the method Socrates used to teach his students how to be actively engaged in the struggle to obtain meaning from an unfamiliar and challenging work. A dialectical journal is a written conversation with yourself about a piece of literature that encourages the habit of reflective questioning. You will use a double-entry form to examine details of each chapter and synthesize your understanding of the text.

Directions:

1. Either use a notebook or make a table in Google Drive.
 - ☐ For a notebook, fold pages in half vertically or draw a vertical line down the middle of the page.
 - ☐ For Google Drive, make a table by clicking on Table in the toolbar and insert table. Make it two columns and then at least as many rows as is chapters in the text.
2. Label the top of each column: left *Text* and right *Analysis of Significance*
3. In the *Text* column, cite passages verbatim from the novel, including quotation marks and page numbers (Page numbers are given in parentheses, known as a parenthetical citation, at the end of the quote).
 - ☐ Choose TWO quotes from each chapter
 - ☐ When should you write a quote down?
 - ☐ A detail that seems important to you
 - ☐ You find an interesting or potentially significant quotation
 - ☐ You learn something significant about a character
 - ☐ You recognize a pattern (overlapping images, repetition of an idea or detail)
 - ☐ You agree or disagree with something a character says or does
 - ☐ You notice something important or relevant about the writer’s style
 - ☐ You notice effective use of literary or rhetorical devices
4. In the *Analysis of Significance* column, reflect upon the quote and respond thoughtfully
 - ☐ Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text
 - ☐ Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character
 - ☐ Write about what it makes you think or feel
 - ☐ Argue with or speak to the characters or author
 - ☐ Make connections to any themes that are revealed to you
 - ☐ Make connections among passages or sections of the work
 - ☐ Make predictions about characters’ futures
 - ☐ DO NOT MERELY SUMMARIZE THE QUOTE. Each RESPONSE should be an insightful analysis of the significance of the quote.
5. Write down your thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas while you read or immediately after reading a chapter so the information is fresh
6. As you take notes, you should regularly reread the previous pages of notes and comments

Example from *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee:

Text (with page number)	Analysis of Significance
“‘You can just take that back, boy!’ This order, given by me to Cecil Jacobs, was the beginning of a rather thin time for Jem and me. My fists were clenched and I was ready to let fly. Atticus had promised me he would wear me out if he heard of me fighting any more; I was far too old and too big for such childish things, and the sooner I learned to hold in, the better off everybody would be. I soon forgot. Cecil Jacobs made me forget” (Lee 85).	CHARACTER ANALYSIS: Cecil insults Atticus because he’s defending Tom Robinson and Scout feels compelled to defend him in the school yard. Atticus has made her promise that she will not fight anymore because she’s too old for such childish behavior. This is a turning point for Scout as she has to walk away from a fight to keep her word to Atticus. She does not like it, but she does it for her father.

Example from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros :

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Text (with page number)	Analysis of Significance
“But my mother’s hair, my mother’s hair, like little rosettes, like little candy circles all curly and pretty because she pinned it in pin-curls all day, sweet to put your nose into when she is holding you, holding you and you feel safe, is the warm smell of bread before you bake it, is the smell when she makes room for you on her side of the bed” (Cisneros 10-11).	AUTHOR’S STYLE: The author’s use of similes and metaphors describing her mother’s hair signifies the comfort provided by one’s mother. She describes her father’s hair in one sentence— as well as the hair of the other family members. The repetition of “holding you” reiterates a strong connection to her mother, possibly the most important relationship in her life—at least in her family. Other evidence of this closeness is the association of a smell—the smell of bread—with her mother.