

Middletown Township Public Schools

High School North and South English Departments

Middletown, NJ 07748



Carol Buckley
Assistant Principal – North
(732) 706-6061 x1221



Marie Caldaro
Assistant Principal – South
(732) 706-6111 x2162

District Website: <http://www.middletownk12.org>

Karen L. Bilbao
Superintendent of Schools

Fred Carrigg
Assistant Superintendent for Accountability

June 2009

Parents and Freshmen Students, Class of 2013:

All **freshmen** entering High School North or High School South in September 2009 are required to read **two novels** this summer. Read and follow the directions below:

9 Honors' students must read: ***Big Fish*** by Daniel Wallace

All other grade 9 levels must read: ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*** by Mark Haddon

For the above stated novels, all students **must submit** a completed **reader response journal** to their English teacher **on or before the first Monday of school**. The student is to:

- Choose ten (10) quotations from the text and respond to each, explaining their significance in the overall context of the novel and/or give a personal response to the quote.
- Quotes must be spread out over the entirety of the book (i.e., the quotes cannot come from the first few chapters).
- Students may use the attached reader-response form or type their responses in the same format.

In addition, all freshmen students **must choose and read one book*** from the following list. English teachers will assess the second book in September.

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden by Joanne Greenberg
The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon
When I Was Puerto Rican by Esmerelda Santiago
My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult

The Road by Cormac McCarthy
Johnny Got His Gun by Dalton Trumbo
Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario
Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood
by Marjane Satrapi

Books may be borrowed from the Middletown Public Library. They may, also, be purchased at Barnes and Noble (in Holmdel or Eatontown) or at Borders (in Eatontown). All locations have received requests from us to have the books in stock.

Please address any questions to the Assistant Principals of Curriculum indicated below.

Sincerely yours,

Carol Buckley, Assistant Principal
High School North

Marie D. Caldaro, Assistant Principal
High School South

*See attached page for book descriptions.

CC: Karen Bilbao
Fred Carrigg

Big Fish by Daniel Wallace

In his prime, Edward Bloom was an extraordinary man. There wasn't anything he couldn't do -- and do well. He could outrun anybody. He never missed a day of school, even in the worst blizzard. He saved lives. Animals loved him, people loved him, women loved him. He was an inspired salesman -- a visionary, in fact. And he knew more jokes than any man alive. Or at least that's what he's told his son, William. William doesn't really know his father because, actually, Edward wasn't home all that much. What William knows about his father he's had to piece together from the little bits of stories he's gathered over the years. Now, watching his father die, William grows increasingly desperate to know him before it's too late. And in a wonderful sleight of hand, William recreates his elusive father's life in a series of legends and myths inspired by the few facts he knows. Through these tales, William begins to understand Edward Bloom's great feats -- and his great failings. He manages, somehow, to reckon with the father he's about to lose. And he finds a way to say good-bye.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

This mystery story is told in the first person by a 15-year-old boy with Asperger's Syndrome (which is essentially high-functioning autism) whose obsession lies with mathematics. Christopher Boone is a mathematical savant, able to understand and create complex mathematical arguments with utmost ease. Though he is completely devoid of the ability to recognize human emotions, to comprehend metaphors, or filter the overwhelming sensory cacophony of the everyday world, Christopher sets out on a difficult journey, with mathematics serving as the only stable unchanging facet in his crumbling world.

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden by Joanne Greenberg

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden is a semi-autobiographical account of a teenage girl's three-year battle with schizophrenia. Deborah Blau, bright and artistically talented, has created a world, the Kingdom of Yr, as a form of defense from a confusing, frightening reality. When Deborah was five, she underwent surgery to remove a tumor in her ovaries, a traumatic experience that involved a great deal of physical pain and shame. During her childhood, Deborah suffered frequent abuse from her anti-Semitic peers and neighbors. When Deborah first created Yr, it was a beautiful, comforting haven, but over time the gods of Yr became tyrannical dictators who ruled Deborah's every word and action.

Johnny Got His Gun by Dalton Trumbo

This anti-war novel is written from the point of view of an injured World War I infantryman (Joe Bonham). As the plot progresses, we realize how severe the injuries are (most of his face has been blown away and eventually his arms and legs must be amputated--leaving a faceless torso) and why the story is being told by an interior monologue voice.

My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult

Anna is not sick, but she might as well be. By age thirteen, she has undergone countless surgeries, transfusions, and shots so that her older sister, Kate, can somehow fight the leukemia that has plagued her since childhood. The product of preimplantation genetic diagnosis, Anna was conceived as a bone marrow match for Kate -- a life and a role that she has never challenged...until now. Like most teenagers, Anna is beginning to question who she truly is. But unlike most teenagers, she has always been defined in terms of her sister -- and so Anna makes a decision that for most would be unthinkable, a decision that will tear her family apart and have perhaps fatal consequences for the sister she loves.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food--and each other. *The Road* is the profoundly moving story of a journey. It boldly imagines a future in which no hope remains, but in which the father and his son, "each the other's world entire," are sustained by love. Awesome in the totality of its vision, it is an unflinching meditation on the worst and the best that we are capable of: ultimate destructiveness, desperate tenacity, and the tenderness that keeps two people alive in the face of total devastation.

Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario

When Enrique is five years old, his mother, Lourdes, too poor to feed her children, leaves Honduras to work in the United States. The move allows her to send money back home to Enrique so he can eat better and go to school past the third grade. Lourdes promises Enrique she will return quickly. But she struggles in America. Years pass. He begs for his mother to come back. Without her, he becomes lonely and troubled. When she calls, Lourdes tells him to be patient. Enrique despairs of ever seeing her again. After eleven years apart, he decides he will go find her. Enrique sets off alone from Tegucigalpa, with little more than a slip of paper bearing his mother's North Carolina telephone number. Without money, he will make the dangerous and illegal trek up the length of Mexico the only way he can--clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains. With gritty determination and a deep longing to be by his mother's side, Enrique travels through hostile, unknown worlds. Each step of the way through Mexico, he and other migrants, many of them children, are hunted like animals. Gangsters control the tops of the trains. Bandits rob and kill migrants up and down the tracks. Corrupt cops all along the route are out to fleece and deport them. To evade Mexican police and immigration authorities, they must jump onto and off the moving boxcars they call *El Tren de la Muerte*--The Train of Death. Enrique pushes forward using his wit, courage, and hope--and the kindness of strangers. It is an epic journey, one thousands of immigrant children make each year to find their mothers in the United States.

Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood by Marjane Satrapi

Originally published to wide critical acclaim in France, where it elicited comparisons to Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, *Persepolis* is Marjane Satrapi's wise, funny, and heartbreaking memoir of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. In powerful black-and-white comic strip images, Satrapi tells the story of her life in Tehran from ages six to fourteen, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and the devastating effects of war with Iraq. The intelligent and outspoken only child of committed Marxists and the great-granddaughter of one of Iran's last emperors, Marjane bears witness to a childhood uniquely entwined with the history of her country. *Persepolis* paints an unforgettable portrait of daily life in Iran: of the bewildering contradictions between home life and public life and of the enormous toll repressive regimes exact on the individual spirit. Marjane's child's-eye-view of dethroned emperors, state-sanctioned whippings, and heroes of the revolution allows us to learn as she does the history of this fascinating country and of her own extraordinary family. Intensely personal, profoundly political, and wholly original, *Persepolis* is at once a story of growing up and a stunning reminder of the human cost of war and political

repression. It shows how we carry on, through laughter and tears, in the face of absurdity. And, finally, it introduces us to an irresistible little girl with whom we cannot help but fall in love.

When I Was Puerto Rican by Esmeralda Santiago

Esmeralda Santiago's story begins in rural Puerto Rico, where her childhood was full of tenderness and domestic strife, tropical sounds and sights as well as poverty. Growing up, she learned the proper way to eat a guava, the sound of tree frogs in the mango groves at night, the taste of the delectable sausage called morcilla, and the formula for ushering a dead baby's soul to heaven. As she enters school we see the clash, both hilarious and fierce, of Puerto Rican and Yankee culture. When her mother, Mami, a force of nature, takes off to New York with her seven, soon to be eleven children, Esmeralda, the oldest, must learn new rules, a new language, and eventually take on a new identity. In this first volume of her much-praised, bestselling trilogy, Santiago brilliantly recreates the idyllic landscape and tumultuous family life of her earliest years and her tremendous journey from the barrio to Brooklyn, from translating for her mother at the welfare office to high honors at Harvard.

The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon

In the postwar calm of 1945 Barcelona, ten-year-old Daniel Sempere awakes from a nightmare and, to his horror, realizes that he can no longer remember the face of his deceased mother. In an effort to divert his son's attention from this sharply felt fear and loss, his father, a rare-book dealer, first swears Daniel to secrecy, then takes him to a clandestine library where Daniel is allowed to select a single book. Entranced, Daniel picks a novel, *The Shadow of the Wind*, written by the enigmatic Julián Carax, who is rumored to have fled Spain under murky circumstances, and later died. As Daniel begins to search for other works by his favorite new author, he discovers that they have all been destroyed -- torched by a mysterious stranger obsessed with obliterating Carax's literary legacy from the face of the earth. Though Daniel's copy of Carax's novel is the last in existence, he's unwilling to part with it at any price and dedicates himself to revealing the truth about Carax. Aided in his quest by the good-humored Fermín Romero de Torres, a former beggar whose "difficult life-lessons" enable him to keep a step ahead of trouble, Daniel begins to uncover a tale of murder, madness, and secrets that might best be forgotten. And as he wends his way through Barcelona society, both high and low, he comes to realize that his own part in *The Shadow of the Wind* is more than that of a mere reader.

Reader Response Journal

Page #	Quote	Significance/Reaction
Quote 1		
Quote 2		
Quote 3		

Quote 4		
Quote 5		
Quote 6		
Quote 7		

Quote 8		
Quote 9		
Quote 10		