

CRMS Incoming 9th Grade Summer Reading and Writing Assignment

Welcome, incoming 9th Graders! My name is Alex Perkins, and I will be your English teacher this year. During the summer, you will be required to read *Piecing Me Together* by Renée Watson. Please read the book, complete the assignment, and submit your written response to my email (aperkins@crms.org) by Monday, August 15th. You will also need to bring the book with you on the first day of class; this will be a book that will remain part of our conversations throughout the school year.

Brief Description of *Piecing Me Together*:

"Watson's elegantly crafted novel speaks to the myriad of people who find themselves searching for themselves in the world. Timely and timeless, *Piecing Me Together* is a book about the ways young people deal with the hardships and heartbreak of everyday living while remaining whole and true to themselves. There is a little bit of Jade in all of us. As she and the rest of Watson's characters jumped off the page and into my heart, I found myself, again and again, remembering this."

- Jacqueline Woodson (from Bookshop.org)

Some important things to think about as you approach this assignment:

1. Give yourself enough time to relax and enjoy this book. Everyone is coming into this class with a different relationship to reading and that is a wonderful thing. Do your best to have a positive experience with this story and try not to get stressed out about the assignment. We will explore this book together as a class.
2. Audio versions of this book are available at most libraries and can be purchased. This is a wonderful resource to help develop reading skills, just be sure you are reading as you listen.
3. Experiment with underlining! Underline important sentences. It is a skill we will be developing throughout the school year, and this is a great place to start. Many of you are already comfortable with this, and this will help you understand and reference important parts of the book.
4. Be very careful when using online resources. It is acceptable to use online resources to help your understanding of a book, but be sure any ideas you express about the story represent your own thinking.

Part I: Read and underline

- Underline one or two lines about the characters that seem like they will be important to the story.

For example, for the character EJ, I underlined the section on page 7 that says, "EJ is my mom's brother, but I have never called him Uncle EJ. He is twenty, so we are more like siblings."

- Underline a line or two about events in the story that seem important to the plot.

For example, I underlined the section on the bottom of page 17 that says, "Mrs. Parker tells me that 12 girls from high schools throughout the city have been selected to participate in Women to Women. Each of us will be paired with a mentor." This is an important event that will have an impact on the story.

- Underline short sections of the book that are concerned with some of the following big ideas that the novel explores:

Racism

Wealth/poverty divide

language

The value of friendship

Finding beauty

Standing up for one's beliefs

Stereotypes

Any other ideas you notice

For example, I underlined the section on page 5 that says, "... their mothers are the kind of people who hire housekeepers, and my mother is the kind of person who works as one." I underlined this because it shows the poverty/wealth divide.

Part II: Written response

Select five short quotations from the book, briefly explain what is happening at that point in the story, and then explain why this quote is important. These responses should be roughly three to five sentences long (not including the quotation). Please try to use examples from the beginning, middle, and end of the story, and be sure to include the page where the quotation appears. **Please submit this to my email (aperkins@crms.org) by 5pm MDT, Monday, August 15th.**

Here is an example:

"Mom doesn't understand that I want to have Lee Lee to look at when something funny happens --something that's only funny to us. Our eyes have a way of finding each other no matter where we are in a room so we can give each other a look" (5).

This is early on in the book when Jade's mom is pushing her to branch out from her neighborhood friends and make more connections at her school. It is important to the story

because it shows the connection that Lee Lee and Jade share. As the paragraph goes on to state, Jade can't always relate to her classmates at school and vice versa. The relationship she shares with Lee Lee gives her strength and assures her it is normal to see and react to things the way she does.

You will get a completion grade for this assignment based on the following:

- **You have an underlined copy of the book with you during the first week of school**
- **You submitted your written response on time, and it meets the above requirements**

Have a great summer and enjoy this book! Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like some clarification about this assignment.

I look forward to meeting you all soon!

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