

SHAKER HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SHAKER HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL
20600 Shaker Boulevard
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DAVID GLASNER
Principal

June 2017

Re: Summer Reading Assignment

Dear Parents and Guardians of incoming 8th grade students:

Success for next year begins this summer. When your child enters 8th grade next fall at Shaker Heights Middle School, a rich and exciting learning experience awaits in Language & Literature. Getting into the habit of reading each day will enhance reading skills and expose students to the larger world of literature.

Students entering 8th grade Language & Literature are required to read at least one assigned novel this summer and complete a written assignment for the book. Both Language & Literature 8 and Advanced Language & Literature 8 classes will read *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper and compose a text journal. This written assignment is due for a grade the first day back to school in the fall. Additionally, students will be given an in-class writing assessment based upon this book by their Language & Literature teacher during the first week of school that will be factored into the 1st quarter grade. Please see attached a rationale for our choice of *Copper Sun* as summer reading and an alternative novel. It is the student's responsibility to obtain a copy of the required novel. If securing a book is an issue, please talk to your student's current Language & Literature teacher, the 8th grade Language & Literature department chair, or Mrs. Watson in the main office. A number of books are available at the middle school to be checked out this summer and returned in the fall.

We encourage students to read other titles of interest over the summer as well. Independent reading will carry over into the school year and play an important role in the 8th grade Language & Literature curriculum. Check out the SMS Recommended Reading List on the middle school homepage. It is also available in hard copy at both Shaker Public Libraries.

The Language & Literature department is dedicated to working with students and parents to foster an appreciation for reading. It is our hope that the reading done this summer will contribute to this goal. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact Mr. Grosel.

Sincerely,

Ron Grosel
8th Grade Chair
grosel_r@shaker.org

Erika Pfeiffer

Sara Lambert

Lumar Vargas

Regina Canady



Language & Literature 8/Advanced Language & Literature 8 Summer Reading:
Sharon Draper's *Copper Sun*

1. Reading Assignment

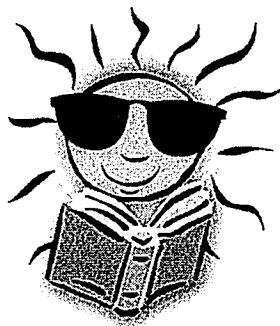
Read the entire novel carefully.

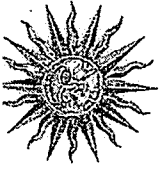
2. Writing Assignment

While reading, students will complete a text journal as outlined in the assignment sheet. The text journal should be typed using the template and posted in Google Classroom. Join the Google Classroom "8th Grade Summer Reading" using code #dc2387. Turn in your completed assignment by your designated guidance counselor: Longino A-G, Abrams H-P, Anderson Q-Z. If students do not have access to technology, a typed or handwritten assignment is acceptable, using the attached template. L&L students must complete 20 entries (roughly one every two chapters) for the text journal, and Advanced L&L students must complete 40 entries. The entries should cover the entire novel.

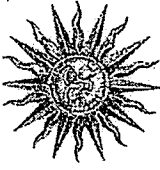
3. Due Date:

The text journal for *Copper Sun* is due Wednesday, August 23, 2017.





Copper Sun



Directions: You are to keep a text journal on Google Docs or loose-leaf paper if handwritten that will be due the first day of school. Your text journal must include at least **20 entries** (L & L 8) or at least **40 entries** (Adv. L&L 8), using the four-column format. Your entries should cover the entire novel. Column one gives the page number and chapter, column two indicates the type of response, column three identifies the passage, and column four is for your response.

Page #	Response Type #	Passage	Response
pg. 1	# 5	"She loved listening to her brother's tales -- everything was an adventure to him."	My little brother plays outside often and prefers nature to electronics. Like me, Amari is an older sister and has a positive relationship with her sibling.
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Summer Reading: Sharon Draper's *Copper Sun*

In preparation for 8th grade Language and Literature, you will be reading *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper. Although we will be working with this book and completing an assessment at the start of the school year, you are required to complete an annotation assignment as you read to ensure that you get the most out of the novel.

- What is annotation? Annotation is a way that readers respond to text and keep a record of those responses.
- Why do we annotate? We annotate so that we can refer back to our ideas when asked to write and talk about the text. It also helps us in the reading process to be more engaged with the text.
- How do we annotate? We will use a method known as text journaling. This is a simple four-column method that helps us keep track of our ideas, where we found them, and what we thought.
- What does text journaling look like? See an example on the attached text journal template.

You are to keep a text journal on Google Docs or loose-leaf paper if handwritten that will be due the first day of school. Your text journal must include at least 20 entries (Language & Literature 8) or at least 40 entries (Advanced Language & Literature 8), using the following four-column format (also shown in the example on the template). Your entries should cover the entire novel. Column one gives the page number and chapter, column two indicates the type of response by number that corresponds to the list below, column three identifies the passage, and column four is for your response.

p. 1	# 5	"She loved listening to her brother's tales -- everything was an adventure to him."	My little brother plays outside often and prefers nature to electronics. Like me, Amari is an older sister and has a positive relationship with her younger brother.
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What kinds of things should I put in my responses?

You can have many different responses, depending upon the passage and what it is that catches your attention about the passage.

Types of Responses by Number. You might:

1. take note of the author's use of literary elements such as metaphor, symbolism, simile, irony, etc., and how they affect the reader.
2. find that a passage raises questions in your mind, and your response takes note of those questions.
3. find the answers to some of your questions within a passage and take note of those answers.
4. notice a shift in the author's tone or in the mood of the piece and explain the shift.
5. make text-to-text, text-to-self, or text-to-world connections.
6. take note of unfamiliar vocabulary (and define in your own words using context clues).
7. identify possible themes.
8. note something that gives you a strong reaction.
9. make a prediction.
10. comment on the importance of the passage.

How will my annotations be graded?

We will be looking for the required minimum of entries-- at least 20 entries for Language & Literature 8 or at least 40 entries for Advanced Language & Literature 8--with at least TWO responses from each of the response types from the list above. Because everyone's experience with the text will be unique, no two text journals will look alike. Keep in mind that the better job you do with your text journaling, the easier it will be for you to complete the work we will do with the novel in the first week of school.

What if I have other questions?

You can reach a Language & Literature teacher by email over the summer.

- ✓ Mr. Grosel, grosel_r@shaker.org
- ✓ Mrs. Pfeiffer, pfeiffer_e@shaker.org
- ✓ Mrs. Lambert, lambert_s@shaker.org
- ✓ Mrs. Vargas, vargas_l@shaker.org
- ✓ Ms. Canady, canady_r@shaker.org

Copper Sun Rationale and Alternative Novel

Sharon Draper's *Copper Sun* is an ideal candidate for an interdisciplinary IB unit. The award-winning novel ties directly to the content of Individuals & Societies at the beginning of the curriculum, namely the slave trade, the middle passage, and indentured servitude. It also connects to the fugitive slave act taught later in the school year. Additionally, the novel relates to the themes of prejudice, discrimination, and hope discussed in Language & Literature classes with such classics as *Night* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and it enables the teaching of numerous Common Core standards. It makes good academic sense to use the novel, but because an IB unit takes time to develop and our curriculum is currently full, we decided to use the novel as summer reading with some interdisciplinary activities at the beginning of the school year.

Sharon Draper is a former teacher with an excellent website full of activities related to *Copper Sun*. Furthermore, Ms. Draper has spoken in our district in the past, and we have purchased and used a number of her books, including *Copper Sun*. This author is especially skilled at making students want to read her books. When Ms. Draper was asked why she deals with heavy themes in her novels, she responded, "I try to deal with topics that are both meaningful and significant. I also hope that by reading my stories, young people can perhaps apply some of the messages to their own lives. Slavery is a topic that should not be ignored, but discussed and remembered. The generation that does not remember the evils of the past may be forced to repeat them. Knowledge is power, and truth is all we have to keep us free."

We think it will be beneficial to have all 8th grade students begin the school year having read the same book. The reading level of *Copper Sun* is only 5th grade (820 lexile level), but the interest level and content are more appropriate for middle school and above. We envision 8th grade students reading and doing the written assignments independently with follow-up in Language & Literature and Individuals & Societies during the first few weeks of school, laying the foundation for the rest of the school year.

This unit is rich with possibilities, and we will continue to develop it throughout the school year. The novel does deal with the harsh realities of slavery, but those realities are not graphically depicted. *Copper Sun* is well-written, suspenseful, tragic, humorous, hopeful, and eventually triumphant—many of the characteristics a reader wants in quality literature. It is also well-researched, even giving information about the little-known safe haven for escaping slaves near St. Augustine, Florida called Fort Mose.

Of course there are other books written about slavery that could be read, such as Laurie Halse Anderson's *Chains*, but we hope to use *Copper Sun* with all students as a springboard into the kind of reading, writing, thinking, and discussing we'll do throughout 8th grade.

If you would rather have your son or daughter read *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson instead of *Copper Sun*, please notify Mr. Grosel (grosel_r@shaker.org). Copies of this alternative book are available at the middle school to be checked out this summer and returned in the fall. Students will still be required to compose the text journal due on the first day back to school in the fall.