

# Relationships & Identity

## Summer Reading Assignment for Students Entering 6th Grade

Summer is here and the new school year is just around the corner! It's time to think about your summer reading assignment.

### **Assignment Directions:**

Select **one** of the four novels listed below. As you read, think about the relationships that the main character has with others in the book. Ask yourself questions like:

- What are the main character's relationships like and do they have a positive or negative effect?
- What did the main character learn and did that character change as a result of their relationships?

Answer the 3 questions listed for the book you read and write a detailed response. You do not have to answer them in the order they are listed.

### **The One and Only Ivan by Katharine Applegate**

**Lexile 570 336 pages**

Having spent twenty-seven years behind the glass walls of his enclosure in a shopping mall, Ivan has grown accustomed to humans watching him. He hardly ever thinks about his life in the jungle. Instead, Ivan occupies himself with television, his friends Stella and Bob, and painting. But when he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from the wild, he is forced to see their home, and his art, through new eyes

### **The Lions of Little Rock by Kristin Levine**

**Lexile 630 320 pages**

As twelve-year-old Marlee starts middle school in 1958 Little Rock, it feels like her whole world is falling apart. Until she meets Liz, the new girl at school. Liz is everything Marlee wishes she could be: she's brave, brash and always knows the right thing to say. But when Liz leaves school without even a good-bye, the rumor is that Liz was caught passing for white. Marlee decides that doesn't matter. She just wants her friend back. And to stay friends, Marlee and Liz are even willing to take on segregation and the dangers their friendship could bring to both their families.

### **Holes by Louis Sachar**

**Lexile 660 233 pages**

Stanley Yelnats is under a curse. A curse that began with his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather and has since followed generations of Yelnats. Now Stanley has been unjustly sent to a boys' detention center, Camp Green Lake, where the boys build character by spending all day, every day digging holes exactly five feet wide and five feet deep. There is no lake at Camp Green Lake. But there are an awful lot of holes.

### **The Skin I'm In by Sharon Flake**

**Lexile 670 192 pages**

Maleeka suffers every day from the taunts of the other kids in her class. If they're not getting at her about her homemade clothes or her good grades, it's about her dark, black skin. When a new teacher, whose face is blotched with a startling white patch, starts at their school, Maleeka can see there is bound to be trouble for her too. But the new teacher's attitude surprises Maleeka. Miss Saunders loves the skin she's in. Can Maleeka learn to do the same?

**DUE DATE: Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup> 2023**

**THIS ASSIGNMENT COUNTS AS A GRADE IN Q1!**

## Guidelines

1. You must answer all three questions listed for your book.
2. Each answer must be written in paragraph format neatly and in complete sentences.
3. The answer must make it clear that you read the book. That means that you should include textual evidence (specific details or descriptions) and page numbers to back up what you said.
4. Each entry should begin on a new page and be clearly labeled with the book title and question number at the top. You may rewrite the question at the top of the page if you choose.
5. You are encouraged to use this packet for the assignment, but you may use a notebook, lined paper, or a Google document as well. You will find an example of an answer below.

## Example

**Note: The novel Wonder is NOT a summer reading choice, but it is used below to show the length and depth of writing that is expected with this assignment.**

Book: Wonder by R.J. Palacio Question 1

Is Jack or Summer a better friend to Auggie?

*Summer is a better friend to Auggie than Jack because she was more loyal to Auggie. Summer was there for Auggie even during challenging times. For example, on the first day of school Summer sat with Auggie when the other kids refused to. Summer always stood up for Auggie when other kids made fun of him or asked her why she was friends with him. Unlike Summer, Jack was not always loyal to Auggie. Even though Jack and Auggie were friends at the start of the story, Jack made fun of Auggie so he could fit in with Julian and his friends. Auggie overheard Jack telling Julian that he would "kill himself" if he looked like Auggie. When Auggie overheard him, his feelings were hurt. Later, Jack apologized to Auggie and Auggie forgave him. A good friend is someone who stands up for you no matter what. Summer really cared about Auggie's feelings and made a point to be there for him in good times and bad times. On the other hand, Jack seemed to care more about being popular than sticking up for a friend in need.*

# Questions to Answer

## **The One and Only Ivan by Katharine Applegate**

1. What are the characteristics of Stella and Bob that make Ivan call them his best friends? Why is each of them important to Ivan?
2. What do Ivan and Stella have in common? How are they alike and how are they different?
3. Describe the special Bond between Julia and Ivan. Why is she different from all of the other children who come to see his shows?

## **The Lions of Little Rocks Lexile by Kristin Levine**

1. Describe Marlee's family at the start of the story. Do you think they are a strong family unit? How do the opposing viewpoints regarding the issue of integration\* impact their relationship?
2. How does time spent working to develop her friendship with Liz help Marlee to better understand herself?
3. Using the phrase, "In this story, belonging means...", discuss the issue of belonging in The Lions of Little Rock. Explain your thinking about what it means to belong.

\*integration: to end a policy that keeps people of different races apart in (a place, such as a school)

## **Holes by Louis Sachar**

1. At home, Stanley did not have friends. But at Camp Green Lake, he forms a special friendship with Zero. How did Zero and Stanley prove their friendship to each other? In what way does Zero fill a hole in Stanley's life?
2. How is Stanley's friendship with Zero similar to Kate Barlow's friendship with Sam? In each case why don't people approve of the friendship?
3. Why do you think Stanley starts to call Zero by his real name, Hector?

## **The Skin I'm In by Sharon Draper**

1. Why does Maleeka decide to vandalize Miss Saunders' classroom, and act against her conscience and better judgement? What alternatives does Maleeka have in this situation?
2. Why do you think Maleeka "changed her mind" about attending the better school? How do her feelings about her color and appearance play into this decision?
3. What do you think was the turning point for Maleeka? What brought her to the point where she felt that she deserved better than the bullying she had endured?





