

June 2022

Dear incoming 8th graders,

In order to prepare for 8th grade, we ask that you read two books over the summer. *Just Mercy* has been selected for you to explore the way our country's history impacts the present moment. This will lead us to an exploration of themes such as division, equality, freedom, justice, identity, and activism. The remainder of the books also touch upon these themes in different ways. As you read, you will use a list of prompts and questions to respond to the book. (See pages 3-9 for specific directions and see pages 10-11 for examples).

YOU MUST READ:		
<b>Book 1:</b> (non-fiction)	<b>Title:</b> Just Mercy (Adapted for Young Adults): A True Story of the Fight for Justice <b>Author:</b> Bryan Stevenson	ISBN-10: 0525580034.  ISBN-13: 978-0525580034
CHOOSE 1: (Please read the first page of each book to determine your interest)		
<b>Option 1:</b> (memoir & graphic novel)	<b>Title:</b> They Called Us Enemy <b>Author:</b> George Takei <b>Link to Preview:</b> <a href="#">They Called Us Enemy (9781603094504): Takei, George, Eisinger, Justin, Scott, Steven, Becker, Harmony: Books</a>	ISBN-10: 1603094504  ISBN-13: 978-1603094504
<b>Option 2:</b> (non-fiction)	<b>Title:</b> Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning <b>Author:</b> Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi <b>Link to Preview:</b> <a href="#">Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning</a>	ISBN-10: 0316453692.  ISBN-13: 978-0316453691
<b>Option 3:</b> (fiction)	<b>Title:</b> The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano <b>Author:</b> Sonia Manzano <b>Link to Preview:</b> <a href="#">The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano (9780545325066): Manzano, Sonia: Books</a>	ISBN-10 : 0545325064  ISBN-13 : 978-0545325066
<b>Option 4:</b> (historical fiction)	<b>Title:</b> Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two <b>Author:</b> Joseph Bruchac <b>Link to Preview:</b> <a href="#">Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two</a>	ISBN-10 : 0142405965 ISBN-13 : 978-0142405963
<b>Option 5:</b> (fiction)	<b>Title:</b> Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe <b>Author:</b> Benjamin Alire Sáenz <b>Link to Preview:</b> <a href="#">Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe</a>	ISBN-10 : 1442408936  ISBN-13 : 978-1442408937

<b>Option 6:</b> (historical fiction)	<b>Title:</b> One Crazy Summer <b>Author:</b> Rita Williams-Garcia <b>Link to Preview:</b> <a href="#">One Crazy Summer: Williams-Garcia, Rita: 9780060760908</a>	ISBN-10 : 0060760907 ISBN-13 : 978-0060760908
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**Annotation Directions:** While reading each book, please respond to at least 10-15 parts that stand out to you. Below are some questions to help guide your annotations. You do NOT need to answer all of them. Please use the attached graphic organizers to record your annotations. You may copy and paste these graphic organizers so that you can type on them. You may also print the graphic organizers and handwrite your annotations. In September, we will share directions for how to upload your work to Google Classroom.

Please see the guiding questions and the graphic organizer format on pages 4-9.

Have a great summer!

8th Grade Humanities Teachers

## Just Mercy (Adapted for Young Adults): A True Story of the Fight for Justice by Bryan Stevenson

Guiding Questions:

- What surprises you?
- What questions do you have?
- What do you want to know more about?
- Which individuals stand out to you?
- Which moments stand out to you?
- This book explores: division, equality, freedom, justice, identity, and activism.  
How do you see these issues coming up in the book?
- This book addresses systemic racism. What do you think this means?
- This book makes connections between past and present. What connections do you notice between past and present?
- Bryan Stevenson is trying to make change. What kind of change is he making?  
How is he making it? Why is he pursuing change? What obstacles does he encounter?

Page Number	Annotation













## Examples of Student Work

These are some examples of exemplary annotations:

### Example #1 (*Just Mercy*):

Page Number	Annotation
16	Systemic racism causes Black people and other minorities to have less opportunities and therefore less money. Because of bias people think that if someone is poor or of a minority group they are guilty. These minorities most likely don't have the money to get access to good lawyers and are condemned, innocent or not. So, because of systemic racism this process is very flawed.
108	The sheriff bribed Bill Hooks with \$5,000 to testify against Walter to get him on death row and he was in no way punished. Why were there no consequences for Sheriff Tate's actions?
51-52	Even though I know that not everyone is a good person all the time, it shocked me to see how selfish and unfair Sheriff Tate and his investigators were. Sheriff Tate and his team decided that the fact McMillian was Black and in a interracial relationship was enough evidence to say he was guilty. Even when witnesses argued against the arrest and Myers came through to say the McMillian story wasn't true the investigative team didn't care at all. It pains me to see that McMillian was wrongly condemned and was forced into prison just because the investigators felt that their reputation was more important.

### Example #2 (*Stamped*):

PAGE #	ANNOTATIONS
5	One part of the story that surprises me is in the beginning of the book, on page 5. The author states that "capturing people wasn't an unusual thing back then." This surprises me because compared to the twenty-first century, not everyone had freedom. Times have greatly changed and although some people's freedom may be limited, freedom seems to have been non-existent. This statement makes me feel grateful knowing that I have freedom in this world, unlike people in the 1400's.
47	I have a few questions for Thomas Jefferson, such as how did he feel about slavery, and how could he write "all men are created equal," and still own human beings. Thomas Jefferson confuses me because he studied antiracism, and still owned slaves. I also want to know if the way he treated his slaves varied from other slave owners?
56	This chapter brings up the topic that "slaves were taking matters into their own hands." This reminded me of the protests that are currently taking place. Today, many

	people are fed up with mistreatment directed to African Americans, so they are taking a stand. In 1776, slaves were also upset with how they were treated so they started protesting in a different way, such as by "running away from plantations located all over the south."
66	<i>"Make yourself small, make yourself unthreatening, make yourself the same, make yourself safe, make yourself quiet, to make White people comfortable with your existence."</i> This quote stands out to me because it shows how African Americans had to change their lifestyle to fit in, based on White American's preferences. I find this absurd because although African Americans looked different, does not at all give any reason for the White's to treat them any differently.