

English 7 - Summer Reading Guide

Johnny Tremain by Esther Forbes

Johnny Tremain is an historical novel about a young teenage boy who has to grow up quickly in colonial Boston during the years leading up to the start of the American Revolution.

1. As you are reading, keep track of the characters that interact with Johnny, writing down their names and the relationships they have with him.
2. Also notice how Johnny's character changes, largely because of the influence of his friend Rab, from an arrogant, self-centered boy into a quietly confident, selfless, and brave young man.
3. *Johnny Tremain* was published at the beginning of the Second World War when millions of young Americans left their homes to protect their families and their fellow citizens in a war against tyranny. As you are reading the second half of the book, notice how Johnny's fears about violence and about war with the British develop and how he eventually resolves them.

Holes by Louis Sachar

Holes, a novel set in present day America, is also about a young teenage boy whose character changes considerably for the better over the course of the story. Unjustly accused and convicted of theft, he is sent to a boys' detention center in a desert-like area of Texas, where he is required to dig a hole five deep and five feet wide each day. There he meets several other boys, one of whom, a youngster nicknamed Zero, helps Stanley redeem himself as well as other people in more ways than one as he changes from a timid, self-conscious individual into a compassionate and courageous young man.

1. As you read the story, keep track of all of the characters who interact with Stanley as well as the characters whose stories seem only vaguely related to Stanley but which, in

fact, play a large part in the development of his character- for example, the story of his great-great grandfather Elya “cursed” by Madame Zeroni; the story of his great-grandfather Stanley robbed by the outlaw Kate Barlow; and the tragic story of Kate torn from her friend Sam, the onion man.

2. Notice how onions and a drink called “sloosh” play significant roles in Stanley’s life and in the lives of other characters in the story.