

# NINTH GRADE SUMMER READING

## Book Talk Assignment

Upon return to school in September of 2017, you will be asked to give a **book talk** to the class or to a small group for one of the books you have read during the summer. A book talk involves delivering a brief presentation where you convince the listener to read the book you are recommending. A book talk is very similar to a trailer for a film, which shows just enough information to convince the audience that he/she should watch the movie. **Remember, you do not want to give away all that happened in the book because your goal is to encourage others to read it.**

A book talk should last approximately 3 minutes and include the following:

- The book title, author, and genre (mention if it is part of a series), and length (number of pages)
- A brief summary of the book without giving away the ending (Use SWBS- see *How to Give a Book Talk* sheet)
- An interesting or exciting excerpt from the book that will entice the audience to want to read your book.
- Things your peers would connect to that may help them better understand the book (for example, other similar books, why your age group would like it, etc...)
- A recommendation for reading (see examples on the *How to...* sheet)

Book Talk Planning:

- Carefully select one of the independent reading books that you read over the summer to present to your 2017-2018 ELA class.
- The book should be reading level and grade level appropriate. (See *Suggested Book List* and *Resources* pages to get help in selecting an appropriate book.)
- Although you may choose any book you want, your presentation will be better if you give a talk on a book that many have not already read. Remember, your goal is to encourage others to read it!
- Prepare for giving your book talk by using the attached resources (*How to Give a Book Talk* sheet, Video links to sample book talks, *Book Talk Scoring Rubric*, etc.)
- Practice, practice, practice! Give your book talk aloud to your friends, family, pet, or even in the mirror a few times before school starts.
- Be ready to present during the first two weeks of school. (You will schedule your book talk time slot with your 2017-2018 ELA teacher. You will also have time to work with your new teacher in September if you have any questions!!)

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### Option #2\*: New York Times Summer Reading Contest

\*This option is only available to students who are 13 or older when entering the contest.

As a second option for summer reading you may enter the New York Times Summer Reading Contest which asks students to respond to New York Times content **between June 16 and August 25 (final question posted on August 18)**.

**First:** Review the rules for entry at [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/27/learning/the-eighth-annual-new-york-times-summer-reading-contest.html?\\_r=1](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/27/learning/the-eighth-annual-new-york-times-summer-reading-contest.html?_r=1)

**Next:**

Adhere to the following additional criteria in order to get full credit upon return to school in September.

- Submit 3 separate blog entries in 3 separate weeks.
- When submitting your entry online, use the following code pattern so that your teacher can verify that it is your entry: the word "Bengal", incoming grade level, first name, and six-digit birthday. For example "**bengal9James011403**"
- Print a screen shot of your entries once they are posted on the New York Times website to hand in to your English teacher in September 2017.
- In addition to the screen shots, please have your 3 entries typed in a separate word document with your full name and your coded name.
- When you return to school, you will be asked to take part in a discussion group where you will share your NYT contest entries with your teacher and other students.

### Students Entering Honors Level ELA:

In addition to the book you choose for your **book talk** or your participation in the **NYT contest**, you will also be required to read the book, ***A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, by Betty Smith***. (See the synopsis on the **Suggested Book List**). Use the link below to access a question/answer preparation sheet. This sheet will guide you in answering and forming questions while you read in order to prepare notes that can be used during seminar discussion at the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

[Question Sheet Link](https://www.dropbox.com/s/9j4n4zughk4wrck/9th%20grade%20Honors%20seminar%20prep%20sheet.docx?dl=0)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9j4n4zughk4wrck/9th%20grade%20Honors%20seminar%20prep%20sheet.docx?dl=0>

We hope you enjoy your summer reading! Read as many books as possible, and we look forward to hearing your talk in September.

If you have any questions during the summer months, please contact Suzanne Johnson, Supervisor of English Language Arts. [sjohnson@bloomfield.k12.nj.us](mailto:sjohnson@bloomfield.k12.nj.us)

**READ! READ! READ!**

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## Book Talk Resources

### Choosing a Book:

- <http://www.scholastic.com/bookwizard/>
  - Search this site to find out levels of books or to find lists of books for certain levels.
- [www.arbookfind.com](http://www.arbookfind.com)
  - Search the site to get valuable reading level information and to find out whether the book is included in the Accelerated Reader program.
- [www.teenreads.com](http://www.teenreads.com)
  - Author interviews and reading lists, questions of the month, and a look at what other kids are reading.
- <https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/teen>
  - Good reads is a great resource for reputable recommendations.

### Video Resource:

*How to Give a Book Talk*, by Thomas Burby: a step by step video with a sample book talk. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klN1mTngLq4>

### Video Samples:

These videos can be very helpful, but please keep in mind that not all of the samples below follow the Bloomfield Rubric requirements.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUChXoQ0-OA> - Great examples of short, enticing book talks. This presenter is a fast talker but does a great job of providing summaries without giving too much away! She also provides great connections to why the books are appealing.
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1p1\\_eo7nks&list=PLEF05B5E6D859A4D9&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1p1_eo7nks&list=PLEF05B5E6D859A4D9&index=3) – Male middle student book talk.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e24gsF6bnjQ> – Female middle school student book talk.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzJN13wfH5c> - A funny teacher trying out giving a book talk for the first time.

### Web Links:

Here are some great sites with tips for giving good book talks:

from **Scholastic** - <http://schools.nyc.gov/documents/d75/ais/booktalktips.pdf>

from **Pikes Peak Public Library in Colorado** - <http://ppld.org/booktalking/tips>

An example of a short book talk on *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman

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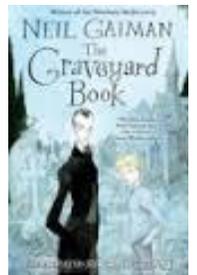
"There was a hand in the darkness, and it held a knife."

So begins the story of Nobody Owens, known as Bod. On the night his family is brutally murdered, 2 year old Bod calmly climbs out of his crib and toddles out of the house and into a nearby cemetery. There he is adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Owens (childless and dead for 250 years!) who gladly care for the child and protect him from harm.

With loving ghostly parents, teachers, friends, and protectors, Bod grows from age two to fifteen in the graveyard. He learns to read and do numbers, and he also learns some ghostly skills. But not all the residents of the graveyard are friendly. There are witches, ghouls, and creatures. As well, let's not forget Jack - the evil fiend who is out to finish the job he started. **(Read the excerpt on pages 17-18 "To the man Jack...the man Jack who was troubled." to entice the reader.)**

This book very much reminds me of the first Harry Potter book because it is also about a how a baby who is left with no parents or family is able to survive due to the kindness and love of strangers. As well, Neil Gaiman brings the reader into a whole new world that us regular people never knew existed just as J.K. Rowling did with the muggles and the magicians.

Filled with great illustrations, this is a funny, exciting and suspenseful story. How will Bod survive? Or will he? Can his loving family and friends really protect him from the evil Jack? This delightfully gruesome and very English tale will certainly appeal to both boys and girls who like adventure stories, suspense and some action. The *Graveyard Book* won the Newbery Award in 2009, and the awards said that the book is a "*delicious mix of murder, fantasy, humour and human longing.*"



(*Adapted from* Diane Ferbrache, Hazen High School Librarian for [The Washington Evergreen Young Adult Book Award](#), 2011)

## How to Give a Book Talk

### Book Selection

- Choose a book that interests you and that you genuinely enjoyed reading. This will make it much easier to entice your peers to want to read it.
- Do not talk on a book you have not read!

### Preparation

- Read the book!
- Take notes (either as you read or when you are finished). Try using sticky notes during reading to mark interesting excerpts.
- Plan and write out your book talk. Decide which method you will use to remember your talk. You may use notes during the talk. But, you will definitely want to practice and rehearse.

### Introduction

- Be sure to include required information: title, author, genre, # of pages (length).
- Tell the audience why you chose this book.

### Summary

- Keep the summary brief but enticing and do not give away the ending.
- Try **SWBS (Somebody Wanted, But, So)**. You may decide not to include So... if it gives too much away.

Somebody Wanted...	But...	So...
Name the main character and what his/her desire is (You can discuss more than one character)	What happens that interferes with the character's attempts to get what he/she wants? (Problem/Conflict)	What does that character do about it?

### Connections/Recommendations

- Give the audience information about the book that they can relate to. For example, "This book reminded me a lot of Harry Potter just without the magic and sorcery."
- Discuss what kinds of readers would like this book (If you are interested in ... then this book is for you.)
- Consider a ranking system – I give this book 5 out of 5 stars.

**Don't forget to bring your book with you to your presentation!**

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### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Suggested Book List

Freshmen begin their studies with **coming-of-age** texts that engage them in questions about self and identity. Who do they believe themselves to be? Who are they in relation to the world?

*(If you choose from outside this list, choose a book that is fitting of the coming-of-age theme.)*

**\*\*These titles have been used on the AP English Literature and Composition test.**

**Myers, Walter Dean. *Monster*. NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1999.**

ISBN-13: 9780064407311 **RL 5.1**

Steve Harmon, 16, is accused of serving as a lookout for a robbery of a Harlem drugstore. The owner was shot and killed, and now Steve is in prison awaiting trial for murder. From there, he tells about his case and his incarceration. Many elements of this story are familiar, but Myers keeps it fresh and alive by telling it from an unusual perspective. Steve, an amateur filmmaker, recounts his experiences in the form of a movie screenplay. His striking scene-by-scene narrative of how his life has dramatically changed is riveting. Interspersed within the script are diary entries in which the teen vividly describes the nightmarish conditions of his confinement. Myers expertly presents the many facets of his protagonist's character and readers will find themselves feeling both sympathy and repugnance for him. Steve searches deep within his soul to prove to himself that he is not the "monster" the prosecutor presented him as to the jury.

**Cofer, Judith Ortiz. *Call Me Maria*. NY: Scholastic Books, 2004.**

ISBN-13: 9780439385787 **RL 5.6**

Maria is a girl caught between two worlds: Puerto Rico, where she was born, and New York, where she now lives in a basement apartment in the barrio. While her mother remains on the island, Maria lives with her father, the super of their building. As she struggles to lose her island accent, Maria does her best to find her place within the unfamiliar culture of the barrio. Finally, with the Spanglish of the barrio people ringing in her ears, she finds the poet within herself. In lush prose and spare, evocative poetry, Cofer weaves a powerful novel, bursting with life and hope.

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**Vulponi, Paul. *Hurricane Song*. NY: Penguin Group, 2009.**

ISBN-13: 9780142414187 **RL 5.4**

Miles has only been living with his musician father in New Orleans for two months when Hurricane Katrina hits — and they haven't really been getting along. His dad lives for jazz, while Miles' first love is football. But father and son must set aside their differences when they seek refuge in the crowded Superdome. What begins as a safe haven from the storm soon turns into a nightmare as the power fails and gangs of thugs compete for turf. When his father decides to rebel, Miles must make a choice that will alter their relationship — and both of their lives — forever. From award-winning author Paul Volponi comes this tale of how low humanity can sink in desperate times and how loudly hope can sing against the howl of tragedy.

**Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak*. NY: Penguin Group, 2006.**

ISBN-13: 9780142407325 **RL 4.5**

Melinda Sordino busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops. Now her old friends won't talk to her, and people she doesn't even know hate her from a distance. The safest place to be is alone, inside her own head. But even that's not safe. Because there's something she's trying not to think about, something about the night of the party that, if she let it in, would blow her carefully constructed disguise to smithereens. And then she would have to speak the truth. This extraordinary first novel has captured the imaginations of teenagers and adults across the country.

**Esquivel, Laura. *Like Water for Chocolate*. NY: Bantam Doubleday Publishing, 1992.**

ISBN-13: 9780385420174 **RL 7.2**

Each chapter of screenwriter Esquivel's utterly charming interpretation of life in turn-of-the-century Mexico begins with a recipe--not surprisingly, since so much of the action of this exquisite first novel (a bestseller in Mexico) centers around the kitchen, the heart and soul of a traditional Mexican family. The youngest daughter of a well-born rancher, Tita has always known her destiny: to remain single and care for her aging mother. When she falls in love, her mother quickly scotches the liaison and tyrannically dictates that Tita's sister Rosaura must marry the luckless suitor, Pedro, in her place. But Tita has one weapon left--her cooking. Esquivel mischievously appropriates the techniques of magical realism to make Tita's contact with food sensual, instinctual and often explosive. Forced to make the cake for her sister's wedding, Tita pours her emotions into the task; each guest who samples a piece bursts into tears. Esquivel does a splendid job of describing the frustration, love and hope expressed through the most domestic and feminine of arts, family cooking, suggesting by implication the limited options available to Mexican women of this period. Tita's unrequited love for Pedro survives the Mexican Revolution the births of Rosaura and Pedro's children, even a proposal of marriage from an eligible doctor. In a poignant conclusion, Tita manages to break the bonds of tradition, if not for herself, then for future generations.

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**Kidd, Sue Monk. *\*\*The Secret Life of Bees.* NY: Penguin Group, 2003.**

ISBN-13: 9780142001745 **RL 5.7**

In Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, 14-year-old Lily Owen, neglected by her father and isolated on their South Carolina peach farm, spends hours imagining a blissful infancy when she was loved and nurtured by her mother, Deborah, whom she barely remembers. These consoling fantasies are her heart's answer to the family story that as a child, in unclear circumstances, Lily accidentally shot and killed her mother. All Lily has left of Deborah is a strange image of a Black Madonna, with the words "Tiburon, South Carolina" scrawled on the back. The search for a mother, and the need to mother oneself, are crucial elements in this well-written coming-of-age story set in the early 1960s against a background of racial violence and unrest. When Lily's beloved nanny, Rosaleen, manages to insult a group of angry white men on her way to register to vote and has to skip town, Lily takes the opportunity to go with her, fleeing to the only place she can think of--Tiburon, South Carolina--determined to find out more about her dead mother.

**Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief.* NY: Hyperion, 2006.**

ISBN-13: 9780786838653 **RL 4.7**

Percy Jackson is about to be kicked out of boarding school...again. And that's the least of his troubles. Lately, mythological monsters and the gods of Mount Olympus seem to be walking straight out of the pages of Percy's Greek mythology textbook and into his life. And worse, he's angered a few of them. Zeus's master lightning bolt has been stolen, and Percy is the prime suspect.

Now Percy and his friends have just ten days to find and return Zeus's stolen property and bring peace to a warring Mount Olympus. But to succeed on his quest, Percy will have to do more than catch the true thief: he must come to terms with the father who abandoned him; solve the riddle of the Oracle, which warns him of betrayal by a friend; and unravel a treachery more powerful than the gods themselves.

**Smith, Betty. *\*\*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn.* NY: Harper Collins, 1943. (Required read for all freshman honors student)**

ISBN-13: 9780060736262 **RL 5.8**

Francie Nolan, avid reader, penny-candy connoisseur, and adroit observer of human nature, has much to ponder in colorful, turn-of-the-century Brooklyn. She grows up with a sweet, tragic father, a severely realistic mother, and an aunt who gives her love too freely--to men, and to a brother who will always be the favored child. Francie learns early the meaning of hunger and the value of a penny. She is her father's child--romantic and hungry for beauty. But she is her mother's child, too--deeply practical and in constant need of truth. Like the Tree of Heaven that grows out of cement or through cellar gratings, resourceful Francie struggles against all odds to survive and

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thrive. Betty Smith's poignant, honest novel created a big stir when it was first published over 50 years ago. Her frank writing about life's squalor was alarming to some of the more genteel society, but the book's humor and pathos ensured its place in the realm of classics--and in the hearts of readers, young and old.

**Salinger, J. D. *\*\*The Catcher in the Rye.* Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company, 1951.**

ISBN-13: 9780316769532 **RL 4.7**

Like many teenagers, 16-year-old Holden Caulfield doesn't really know what he wants to do, although he is sure that he wants to avoid anything phony. First published in 1951, no novel betters Salinger's description of Holden's tortured adolescence as he comes to terms with the transition to adulthood and the onset of a nervous breakdown. It's the integrity of Holden's quest for meaning in his life that has made this book so enduringly popular with all ages. Its humor and deceptively light touch help, too. This is the teenage novel.

**Walls, Jeanette. *The Glass Castle.* NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006.**

ISBN-13: 9780743247542 **RL 5.9**

Jeannette Walls's father always called her "Mountain Goat" and there's perhaps no more apt nickname for a girl who navigated a sheer and towering cliff of childhood both daily and stoically. In *The Glass Castle*, Walls chronicles her upbringing at the hands of eccentric, nomadic parents--Rose Mary, her frustrated-artist mother, and Rex, her brilliant, alcoholic father. To call the elder Walls's childrearing style laissez faire would be putting it mildly. As Rose Mary and Rex, motivated by whims and paranoia, uprooted their kids time and again, the youngsters (Walls, her brother and two sisters) were left largely to their own devices. But while Rex and Rose Mary firmly believed children learned best from their own mistakes, they themselves never seemed to do so, repeating the same disastrous patterns that eventually landed them on the streets. Though Walls has well earned the right to complain, at no point does she play the victim. In fact, Walls' removed, nonjudgmental stance is initially startling, since many of the circumstances she describes could be categorized as abusive (and unquestioningly neglectful). But on the contrary, Walls respects her parents' knack for making hardships feel like adventures, and her love for them--despite their overwhelming self-absorption--resonates from cover to cover.

**Anaya, Rudolfo A. *\*\*Bless Me, Ultima.* NY: Grand Central Publishing, 1972.**

ISBN-13: 9780446600255 **RL 5.4**

A talent for meaningful storytelling and exquisite prose has made Rudolfo Anaya a leading exponent of Chicano literature in English. Anaya's work has won international acclaim, earning him a premier place in virtually every anthology of Latino writing. Now his classic bestseller, *Bless Me, Ultima*, is reborn in this beautifully illustrated special edition. Antonio Marez is six years old when Ultima enters his life. She is a curandera, one who heals with herbs and magic. 'We cannot let her live her last days in loneliness,' says Antonio's mother. 'It is not the way of our people,' agrees his

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father. And so Ultima comes to live with Antonio's family in New Mexico. Soon Tony will journey to the threshold of manhood. Always, Ultima watches over him. She graces him with the courage to face childhood bigotry, diabolical possession, the moral collapse of his brother, and too many violent deaths. Under her wise guidance, Tony will probe the family ties that bind him, and he will find in himself the magical secrets of the pagan past—a mythic legacy equally as palpable as the Catholicism of Latin America in which he has been schooled. At each turn in his life there is Ultima who will nurture the birth of his soul. Enhanced by four full-color paintings by noted New Mexican artist Bernadette Vigil, this book will be treasured by all admirers of Rudolfo Anaya, whether they are longtime followers of his work or are discovering him for the first time.

*All synopses were taken from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)*

**Goodreads suggestions for coming of age novels:**

**[https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/966.New\\_Coming\\_of\\_Age\\_Titles\\_for\\_Required\\_High\\_School\\_Reading](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/966.New_Coming_of_Age_Titles_for_Required_High_School_Reading)**

**\*\*Link to additional titles from the AP book list**

**<http://mseffie.com/AP/APtitles.html>**