Dear Rising 7th Graders,

As you all know, I have the pleasure of being your Form I English teacher in September, so before you head off into the haze of summer, I wanted to introduce the reading you’ll be doing over the summer.

This summer, you are going to choose one of the three Book Club books on the back of this sheet to read, underline, and annotate before you return to school in September.

Given that there are about 12 weeks between the end of this year and the beginning of next, you need to make sure you don't forget what happens in your choice of Book Club book before we reconvene in September!

To that end, you will underline and annotate so that ...

1. you are closely engaged with the novel, and
2. you have useful notes to refer to when you prepare for class discussions.

As I’ve said in class …

your guiding question is: What Strikes You?

As you read, think of yourself as in written conversation in your book’s margins…

- with the characters about the plot and their journey.
- with the author about how she or he crafts this story.

SO …

Your underlinings and annotatings (margin notes) should simply be a recording of this conversation - of your reactions to and thoughts about what you’re reading.

Get in there, and mark that book up! (yes, I will be checking :)
<table>
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<th><strong>Book Club Choices:</strong> (blurbs courtesy of amazon.com)</th>
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| **City of the Beasts** by Isabel Allende  
“Fifteen-year-old Alexander Cold has the chance to take the trip of a lifetime. With his mother in hospital, too ill to look after him, Alex is sent out to his grandmother Kate -- a fearless reporter with blue eyes 'as sharp as daggers' points'. Kate is about to embark on an expedition to the dangerous, remote world of the Amazon rainforest, but rather than change her plans, she simply takes Alex along with her. They set off with their team -- including a local guide and his daughter Nadia, with her wild, curly hair and skin the colour of honey -- in search of a fabled headhunting tribe and a legendary, marauding creature known to locals only as 'the Beast', only to find out much, much more about the mysteries of the jungle and its inhabitants. In a novel rich in adventure, magic and spirit, internationally-celebrated novelist Isabel Allende takes readers of all ages on a voyage of discovery and wonder, deep into the heart of the Amazon.” |
| **Into Thin Air** by Jon Krakauer  
“Into Thin Air is the definitive account of the deadliest season in the history of Everest by the acclaimed journalist and author of the bestseller *Into the Wild*. On assignment for *Outside* Magazine to report on the growing commercialization of the mountain, Krakauer, an accomplished climber, went to the Himalayas as a client of Rob Hall, the most respected high-altitude guide in the world. A rangy, thirty-five-year-old New Zealander, Hall had summited Everest four times between 1990 and 1995 and had led thirty-nine climbers to the top. Ascending the mountain in close proximity to Hall's team was a guided expedition led by Scott Fischer, a forty-year-old American with legendary strength and drive who had climbed the peak without supplemental oxygen in 1994. But neither Hall nor Fischer survived the rogue storm that struck in May 1996. Krakauer examines what it is about Everest that has compelled so many people -- including himself -- to throw caution to the wind, ignore the concerns of loved ones, and willingly subject themselves to such risk, hardship, and expense. Written with emotional clarity and supported by his unimpeachable reporting, Krakauer's eyewitness account of what happened on the roof of the world is a singular achievement.” |
| **Code Name Verity** by Elizabeth Wein  
“Oct. 11th, 1943-A British spy plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France. Its pilot and passenger are best friends. One of the girls has a chance at survival. The other has lost the game before it's barely begun. When ‘Verity’ is arrested by the Gestapo, she's sure she doesn't stand a chance. As a secret agent captured in enemy territory, she's living a spy's worst nightmare. Her Nazi interrogators give her a simple choice: reveal her mission or face a grisly execution. As she intricately weaves her confession, Verity uncovers her past, how she became friends with the pilot Maddie, and why she left Maddie in the wrecked fuselage of their plane. On each new scrap of paper, Verity battles for her life, confronting her views on courage, failure and her desperate hope to make it home. But will trading her secrets be enough to save her from the enemy? A Michael L. Printz Award Honor book that was called "a fiendishly-plotted mind game of a novel" in *The New York Times*, *Code Name Verity* is a visceral read of danger, resolve, and survival that shows just how far true friends will go to save each other.” |