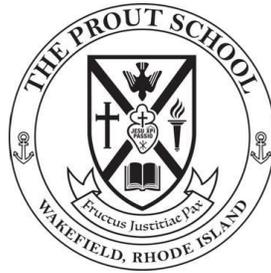


Prout School Summer Reading 2017



Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Prout School encourages students and families to continue reading during the summer months. Literacy research has shown that students often tend to experience the “summer slide” which is a slowing down in reading abilities, vocabulary, comprehension, and focus. This phenomenon is a tendency for students to lose some of the achievement gains they made the previous school year by not reading over the summer. This summer slide will frequently cause students to be less prepared for the academic expectations for the next school year. We want ALL students to have the same chance for academic success from the very first day of school!

Summer reading matters in other ways, too. “Reading empowers critical thinking skills. It can enhance empathy and lead to greater understanding of people who are different from ourselves, and it can help us appreciate other points of view”. (California Library Association) When parents/guardians are able to read the books their children have been assigned for summer reading, the experience can foster wonderful family discussions and build great reading memories. Familial modeling the importance of year round reading will encourage teenagers in becoming lifelong readers.

Reading is an important part of everyday life! The more our students read, the better readers they will be. If you have any questions pertaining to the summer reading, please feel free to contact Miss Mary Hoyt: mhoyt@theproutschool.org.



SUMMER READING 2017 ENGLISH HONORS 11

Great Expectations (Charles Dickens)

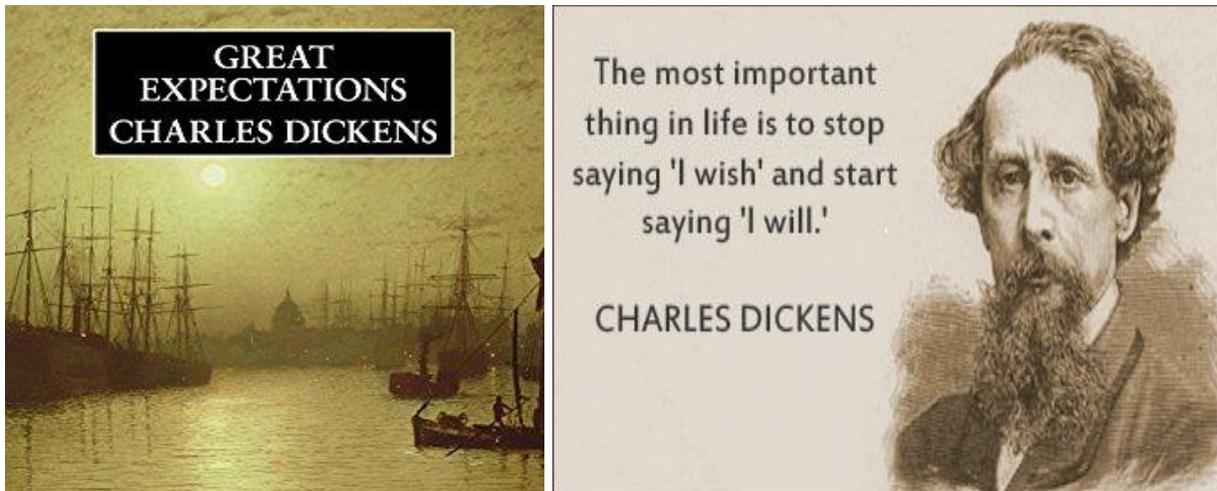
The Hobbit (J.R.R. Tolkien)

Keep the questions at hand as you read and take notes, in the books, if they are yours, or on paper. **Answers to the questions SHOULD NOT be written out.** Guiding questions are just to help students with more effective comprehension.

Assessment – first full day of classes:

You will be asked to respond to short answer questions related to the Guiding Questions.

Great Expectations (Charles Dickens)



Charles Dickens (*Charles John Huffam Dickens*) was born in Landport, Portsmouth, on February 7, 1812. Charles was the second of eight children. The Dickens family moved to London in 1814 and two years later to Chatham, Kent, where Charles spent early years of his childhood. Due to the financial difficulties they moved back to London in 1822, where they settled in Camden Town, a poor neighborhood of London.

A defining moment occurred for Dickens when he was 12 years old. His father, who had a difficult time managing money and was constantly in debt, was imprisoned in the Marshalsea debtor's prison in 1824. Because of this, Charles was withdrawn from school and forced to work in a warehouse that handled 'blacking' or shoe polish to help support the family. This experience left profound psychological and sociological effects on Charles.

It gave him a firsthand acquaintance with poverty and made him the most vigorous and influential voice of the working classes in his age.

Although Dickens's main profession was as a novelist, he continued his journalistic work until the end of his life, editing *The Daily News*, *Household Words*, and *All the Year Round*. His connections to various magazines and newspapers gave him the opportunity to begin publishing his own fiction at the beginning of his career.

Charles Dickens died at home on June 9, 1870 after suffering a stroke. Contrary to his wish to be buried in Rochester Cathedral, he was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. The inscription on his tomb reads:

"He was a sympathizer to the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed; and by his death, one of England's greatest writers is lost to the world." (adapted from: <http://www.dickens-online.info/charles-dickens-biography.htm>)

Summary Overview

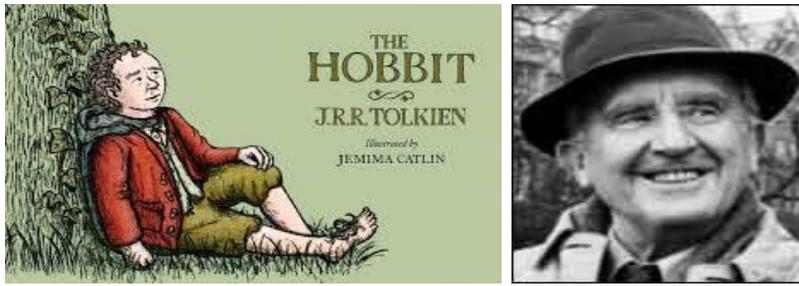
The narrator, Pip recounts his life story from his childhood to how he matures and grows up to becoming a young man. Throughout this transformation, one thing remains unchanged. Pip falls in love with a wealthy but heartless girl named Estella. From that moment on, everything Pip does in his life is no longer for himself or anyone else but for Estella and only her. Pip even receives a fortune from a secret benefactor to pursue an education and he does this along with obtaining wealth, success and high social class in the hopes of becoming worthy in the eyes of his beloved Estella.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. The main character, Pip, knows that Estella is a cruel, ego centered, status oriented person. His awareness of this is displayed in a quote from the book: *"The unqualified truth is, that when I loved Estella with the love of a man, I loved her simply because I found her irresistible. Once for all; I knew to my sorrow, often and often, if not always, that I loved her against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be. Once for all; I loved her nonetheless because I knew it, and it had no more influence in restraining me, than if I had devoutly believed her to be human perfection."* –Pip Reflect on why you feel Pip still wants to be in this relationship, even though he knows it will only bring him emotional pain.
2. Dickens himself, experienced great poverty and hardships growing up, just as Pip did. In the novel, Dickens initially appears to explore the reasons why a person would want to become part of the upper/wealthy class. What lessons does Pip learn from his experience as a wealthy gentleman? How is the theme of social class central to the novel?

3. Throughout the novel, Dickens examines the concept of love in its many different forms. Reflect on the various ways individuals perceive “love” and how they also come to readjust their perceptions by the end of the novel.

The Hobbit (J.R.R. Tolkien)



J.R.R. Tolkien was born in 1892, Bloomfontein, South Africa. After three years in South Africa, he returned to England with his Mother Mabel; unfortunately his father died one year later, leaving him with little memory of his father. His early childhood was, by all accounts, a happy one; he was brought up in the Warwickshire countryside (many regard this idealized upbringing as the basis for the Shire in Lord of the Rings).

In 1904, when John was just 12, his mother Mabel died from diabetes leaving a profound mark on him and his brother. After his mother’s passing, he was brought up by the family’s Catholic priest, Father Francis Morgen. From an early age, J.R.R. Tolkien was an excellent scholar, with an unusually specialized interest in languages. He enjoyed studying languages especially Greek, Anglo Saxon, and later at Oxford, Finnish.

He was awarded a scholarship to Oxford where he would study classics. Uninspired by the classics, John was able to switch to his real love – English literature. He was a competent scholar, but a lot of his time was spent researching other languages in the Bodleian library. It was here in Oxford that he became fascinated with Finnish, which would form the basis for Quenya; a language he would later give to his Elves. His love of languages remained with Tolkien throughout his life; in particular, he began developing his own languages, a remarkable undertaking. In fact, in later commented that languages lied at the heart of his Middle Earth creations.

At the outbreak of the First World War, J.R.R. Tolkien enlisted in 1916. Joining the Lancashire fusiliers, he made it to the Western Front just before the great Somme offensive. At first hand, J.R.R. Tolkien witnessed the horrors and carnage of the “Great War”; he lost many close friends, tellingly he remarked “*By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead*”. J.R.R. Tolkien survived, mainly due to the persistent re-occurrence of trench fever, which saw him invalided back to England. He rarely talked about his experiences directly, but the large-scale horrors of war, will undoubtedly have influenced his writings in some way. Perhaps the imagery for the wastelands of Mordor may have had birth in the muddy horrors of the Western Front.

It was sometime after 1930 that Tolkien gained an unexpected inspiration to start writing the *Hobbit*. It was whilst marking an examination paper, that he jotted in the margins of a paper the immortal words “In a hole in the ground lived a hobbit.”. Hinting at evil things, it still ends in a happy ending for all and is primarily concerned with a triumph of good over evil. JRR Tolkien died in 1973.

(from: http://www.biographyonline.net/writers/tolkien_jrr.)

Summary Overview (Taken directly from:

<http://www.tolkienlibrary.com/booksbytolkien/hobbit/description.htm>)

“ In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

The hobbit-hole in question belongs to Bilbo Baggins, a very respected hobbit. He is, like most of his kind, well off, well fed, and best pleased when sitting by his own fire with a pipe, a glass of good beer, and a meal to look forward to (which they take 6 times if they can). Certainly this particular hobbit is the last person one would expect to see set off on a hazardous journey; indeed, when the wizard Gandalf the Grey stops by one morning, "looking for someone to share in an adventure," Baggins fervently wishes the wizard elsewhere.

No such luck however; soon 13 fortune-seeking dwarves have arrived on the hobbit's doorstep in search for a master burglar, and before he can even grab his hat, handkerchiefs or even an umbrella, Bilbo Baggins is swept out his door and into a dangerous and long adventure.

The dwarves' goal is to return to their ancestral home in the Lonely Mountains and reclaim a stolen fortune from the dragon Smaug. Along the way, they and their reluctant companion meet giant spiders, hostile elves, ravening wolves--and, most perilous of all, a subterranean creature named Gollum from whom Bilbo wins a magical ring in a riddling contest.

By the time Bilbo returns to his comfortable hobbit-hole, he is a different person altogether, well primed for the bigger adventures to come”.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. In the story, J. R. R. Tolkien portrays evil as an extremely powerful force that often tempts “good” creatures into doing evil actions. Reflect on the ways he shows evil to be a powerful force, how he demonstrates evil can be fought, and what he seems to say about the battle between good and evil.

2. Many readers look at Bilbo as being a traditional literary hero. In literature, a classical hero is: “ A young man (or in this case a creature) who must undertake a dangerous quest on behalf of the people in order to prove status as hero and claim the throne; challenge to be sought out and goal to be achieved; hero's quest is of vital importance to the culture and to the people.” In what ways does Bilbo fulfill the characteristics of a classical hero?
3. Many readers think of Bilbo as a leader, although a very reluctant one. What do you believe are the qualities that make up a strong leader? Using those characteristics, reflect on whether or not you feel Bilbo is a strong leader or not and why.

