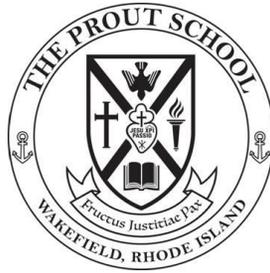


Prout School Summer Reading 2017



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.



Siddhartha (Hermann Hesse)

Animal Farm (George Orwell)

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.

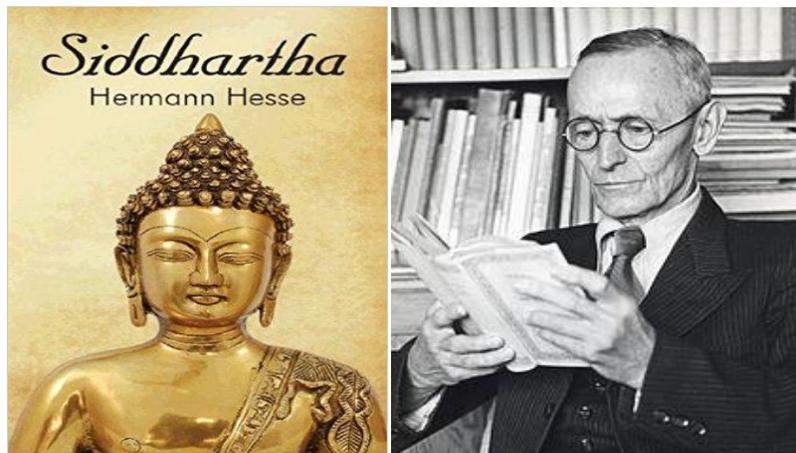
Assessment – first full day of classes:

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

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Siddhartha (Hermann Hesse)



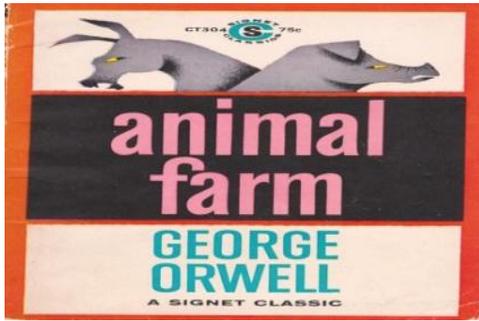
Born on July 2, 1877, in Calw, Germany, Hermann Hesse cultivated a career as a poet before releasing his debut novel, *Peter Camenzind*, in 1904. He eventually penned acclaimed books such as *Siddhartha*, *Steppenwolf* and *The Glass Bead Game*, among other long-form works and novellas. Hesse also protested German fighting during World War I and as such was heavily criticized in the German media. In the early 1920s he was granted Swiss citizenship, and his work would be banned and destroyed in Germany during the regime of Adolf Hitler. Hesse developed an interest in Eastern religion and incorporated much of Buddhist philosophy in his writing. Hesse was awarded the 1946 Nobel Prize in Literature for his body of work. He died on August 9, 1962, in Montagnola, Switzerland. (adapted from: <https://www.biography.com/people/hermann-hesse-9337513>)

Summary Overview

Siddhartha is the son of a wealthy and royal Brahmin living in ancient India. Everyone in the village expects Siddhartha to be a successful Brahmin like his father. Siddhartha, however, feels something is missing in his life as a Brahmin. He leaves his home, and travels to find knowledge, wisdom, and “enlightenment”. Throughout his journey, Siddhartha experiences many different lifestyles in search of finding out who he really is, and what his purpose in life is.

Guiding Questions

- 1. Reflect on *why* Siddhartha seemed dissatisfied with his wealthy/”easy” life with the Brahmins. What caused him to want to leave everything he had always known.**
- 2. Govinda, Siddhartha’s true friend, decides to stay with the Gotama and continue following his teachings. Why do you feel Govinda does this, while Siddhartha leaves**
- 3. In his quest for wisdom, Siddhartha meets, and eventually becomes the lover of Kamala. For a time, he gains satisfaction from this life style of riches and social status. In the end, Kamala knows Siddhartha will eventually leave her. What does this insight display about Kamala’s perceptive understanding of Siddhartha?**
- 4. Throughout the story, Hesse incorporates several symbols to enhance the development of the major themes. One such symbol is that of the bird cage tied in with the dream Kamala has. Reflect on the significance of this symbol in the novel.**
- 5. At the very end of his search, after all the travels and experiences Siddhartha has, what do you feel he has learned?**



Animal Farm (George Orwell)



Born Eric Arthur Blair, George Orwell created some of the sharpest satirical fiction of the 20th century with such works as *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He was a man of strong opinions who addressed some of the major political movements of his times, including imperialism, fascism and communism.

The son of a British civil servant, George Orwell spent his first days in India, where his father was stationed. He was a sick child, often battling bronchitis and the flu. Orwell was bit by the writing bug at an early age, reportedly composing his first poem around the age of four. He later wrote, "I had the lonely child's habit of making up stories and holding conversations with imaginary persons, and I think from the very start my literary ambitions were mixed up with the feeling of being isolated and undervalued."

Like many other boys in England, Orwell was sent to boarding school. After completing his schooling at Eton, Orwell found himself at a dead end. His family did not have the money to pay for a university education. Instead he joined the India Imperial Police Force in 1922. After five years in Burma, Orwell resigned his post and returned to England.

In December 1936, Orwell traveled to Spain, where he joined one of the groups fighting against General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War. Orwell was badly injured during his time with a militia, getting shot in the throat and arm. For several weeks, he was unable to speak. Orwell and his wife, Eileen, were indicted on treason charges in Spain. Fortunately, the charges were brought after the couple had left the country.

Orwell is best known for two novels, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, both of which were published toward the end of his life. *Animal Farm* (1945) was an anti-Soviet satire in a pastoral setting featuring two pigs as its main protagonists. These pigs were said to represent Josef Stalin and Leon Trotsky. The novel brought Orwell great acclaim and financial rewards.

Nineteen Eighty-Four proved to be another huge success for the author, but he had little time to enjoy it. By this time, Orwell was in the late stages of his battle with tuberculosis. He died on January 21, 1950, in a London hospital. He may have passed away all too soon, but his ideas and opinions have lived on through his work. Both *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen*

Eighty-Four have been turned into films and have enjoyed tremendous popularity over the years.(adapted from: <https://www.biography.com/people/george-orwell-9429833>)

Summary Overview

Animal Farm opens with the aged and dying Pig, Old Major, as he gives a an impassioned speech to the other animals of the farm encouraging them to reject the injustice forced upon them by the humans. He rallies the other beasts by discussing a dream he has of a perfect utopia for animals, one in which they were all free from the tyranny of humans and the cruelty of the farmer, Mr. Jones. Eventually, the animals ban together and form a revolution, overtaking Mr. Jones and the farm. They set up a community that begins with the commandment, “All animals are equal”. Soon, this commandment changes and the animals begin to develop class structures that very much resemble that of the original farm hierarchy they revolted against.

**Guiding Questions (adapted from:
<http://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/animalfarm.pdf>)**

1. Explain how *Animal Farm* can be seen as a fable even though it does not have a moral stated at the end. After reading the story, think of a moral of your own and explain it in terms of the novel.
2. Orwell’s story uses animals personified to demonstrate how totalitarian governments can easily take over and oppress others. Keeping this in mind, reflect on why an “enemy” or scapegoat is necessary for the animals. Why does the “enemy” have to change? If there were no “enemy,” what would that mean for any society, including that of Animal Farm?
3. As the original “commandments” begin to change, what happens simultaneously in the animal community? What does it seem Orwell may be commenting on in terms of governmental structures?
4. After finishing the book, reflect on what Orwell seems to be indicating about human nature, as symbolically displayed by the animals.

