

6/28/2016

Dear incoming fifth graders,

I hope you are looking forward to a great summer. My summers generally consist of a lot of gardening, reading, and guitar strumming, along with an occasional bit of fishing. I look forward to hearing about your summer adventures when we return to school. This summer I would like you to read two particular books. First, you need to read *Caddie Woodlawn*, by Carol Ryrie Brink. This is a historical novel set in frontier America. It connects with our fifth grade study of America's westward expansion. Second, you need to read *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*. This overview of Greek mythology will provide background for our study of *The Odyssey*. Both of these books should be available at your local library or bookstore. In addition to these two assigned books, you should read at least one other book of your choice. I'm including a short reading response assignment that I want you to complete before you come to school in the fall. It will give you the chance to think about what you have read, and will give me a way to begin to get to know you as readers and writers. Please be sure to complete the three pages for the three assigned books, and be sure to bring them to school with you on the first day. We will use the pages for an activity in class. You can write your response on the pages provided, or on your own lined paper. Enjoy your summer. I'm really looking forward to being your fifth grade teacher in the coming year!

Sincerely,
Dr. Freeberg
Fifth Grade Teacher

1. Caddie Woodlawn

Caddie Woodlawn's childhood is a lot different from yours—or is it? Write a letter to Caddie. Introduce yourself and tell her some of the ways your childhood is similar to and different from hers. Tell her what parts of your lifestyle you think she would enjoy or dislike. Also tell her which parts of her frontier experience you are glad to have avoided, and which parts you think you would have enjoyed. At the end of your letter, feel free to ask her to write back, or even to visit us at Crossroads! (She probably won't do either one, but it's still polite to extend the invitation.)

2. D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths

The twelve Gods of Olympus have some similarities and differences. Taken as a bunch, they make an interesting group. In one paragraph, try to summarize what these Gods are like. For example, if I were to write a similar summary about Crossroads fifth graders, it might look something like this.

Fifth graders at Crossroads work hard, but they also know how to have fun. Whenever possible, they begin each day with singing, and they have a reputation for singing with great enthusiasm. Occasionally they misplace something or forget to do an assignment, but in general they try hard to be responsible. They also try to be kind and respectful to all their classmates and teachers. With such a positive attitude, the sky is the limit when it comes to accomplishments during the fifth grade year!

That paragraph is about you. Now try to write a descriptive paragraph like that about the Gods of Mt. Olympus.

3. Free Choice

For the third book of your own choosing, identify the title and author, and rate the book on a scale of 1 to 10. Then give two good reasons for your rating, and *support each reason with evidence from the book*. For example, if you say the book was Suspenseful, what was suspenseful about it?

