



BERKSHIRE SCHOOLS

Maximizing each student's potential as an individual and as a responsible citizen

SUMMER READING 2020

Dear Jr/Sr High Berkshire Students,

It is just about summer, which means it is time for summer reading. This year, Berkshire Jr/Sr High School has decided to model the summer reading after “One Book, One City” and “One Book, One School” programs already active around our country. In other words, all students in grades 7-12 will read the same book! Berkshire’s English Department collaboratively selected the nonfiction title ***I will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives*** by **Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda with Liz Welch** for the summer 2020. This unique format can help unify the staff and students, excavate themes through discussions in the classrooms, and encourage a community of readers by forming connections with one another.

**** Honors and AP classes for grades 9-12 have additional titles to read. See summer reading document specific to your course for details.**

Overview (from Barnes & Noble)

***The New York Times* bestselling true story of an all-American girl and a boy from Zimbabwe — and the letter that changed both of their lives forever.**

It started as an assignment. Everyone in Caitlin's class wrote to an unknown student somewhere in a distant place.

Martin was lucky to even receive a pen-pal letter. There were only ten letters, and fifty kids in his class. But he was the top student, so he got the first one.

That letter was the beginning of a correspondence that spanned six years and changed two lives.

In this compelling dual memoir, Caitlin and Martin recount how they became best friends—and better people—through their long-distance exchange. Their story will inspire you to look beyond your own life and wonder about the world at large and your place in it.

About the authors (from Barnes & Noble)

Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda met as pen pals in 1997 and are still best friends today. Caitlin, an ER nurse, lives outside Philadelphia with her husband and young daughters. Martin currently lives in New York. He has dual degrees in mathematics and economics from Villanova University and an MBA in finance from Duke University.

*Liz Welch is an award-winning journalist and memoirist whose critically acclaimed first book, *The Kids Are All Right*, co-authored with her sister Diana Welch, won an ALA Alex Award. Her stories have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Parade*, *Life*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue*, *Glamour*, *Real Simple*, *Self*, *Marie Claire*, and other publications.*

HOW CAN I GET A COPY OF THE BOOK?

Each student is required to obtain a copy (through purchasing or borrowing) of the book. Here are some recommended sites that carry our title:

Half Price Books: <http://www.hpb.com>

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com> (available on Kindle)

Barnes and Noble: <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/> (available on Nook)

Public Library: Students may also borrow the book through the public library.

Online PDF: There are free PDF's of the book online.

Click here: [I Will Always Write Back](#)

THE ASSIGNMENT:

As you read *I Will Always Write Back* you will keep a quote journal and try to make connections between the book and your own life. Be prepared to submit your summer reading quote journal and partake in class discussions.

Step 1: GET THE BOOK

You are responsible for securing a copy of the book. See above for a few options.

Step 2: Read ACTIVELY and complete the quote journal entries for the book. These notes will serve as your preparation for discussions and any additional assignments that you will be required to complete **in class during the first week of school.**

Step 3: As you read your book, keep a quote journal of the important aspects in each book. These quotes should be used to help you write your essays upon your return to school.

- You must have a total of 10 entries but you may complete more
 - You must have three (3) quotes from the beginning (pages 1-96), four (4) quotes from the middle (pages 96-192), and three (3) quotes from the end of the book (pages 192-288). **** NOTE: Depending on the book you have, the page numbers will differ. Just divide the page numbers accordingly. There is a 400 page edition as well.**
 - You will find quotes to support the questions from Prompt A, B and C below. You must have questions from all 3 prompt categories. See below for example.



Questions to ask yourself when looking for quotes:

Prompt A:

- How do people demonstrate strengths and weaknesses? Look for examples of each character's strengths or weaknesses.
- How do these strengths or weaknesses affect the individuals in the text? Think about what happens to the individuals, how their lives change, what becomes of them, etc...
- What are some examples of when strengths and weaknesses lead individuals to grow and learn something new?
- What does this text say regarding weaknesses, strengths, and ultimate success?

Prompt B:

- What are the main ideas presented in this text?
- What do you think is the main message of this text?
- What quotes do you think provide wisdom for the reader?
- What quotes do you think teach a moral lesson?

Prompt C:

- What are the main conflicts within the book (human vs. human, human vs. nature, human vs. society, etc...)?
- How are these conflicts resolved? If they remain unresolved, speculate as to why the author chooses to do so..
- What point(s) are made in the novel through the conflict?

Quote Journal Format Example

Title of Book: *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* Author: Ishmael Bea

Page #	Quotes (write down the quote itself and who said it)	Notes: How does this quote help you answer prompt A, B, or C?
46	"I became frustrated with living in fear. I felt as if I was always waiting for death to come to me, so I decided to go somewhere where at least there was some peace."- Narrator	C- At this moment, the reader is faced with fear- a constant and intense fear that is the product of the story's primary conflict- the intense war and his fear of the rebels. This is definitely a human vs. society conflict that has yet to be resolved.

NAME _____ DATE _____ GRADE LEVEL _____

Summer Reading Quote Journal Format (Pages numbers may differ)

Title of Book: _____ Author: _____

BEGINNING OF THE BOOK (pages ____ to ____)

Page #	Quotes (write down the quote itself and who said it)	Notes: How does this quote help you answer prompt A, B, or C?

MIDDLE OF THE BOOK (pages ____ to ____)

END OF THE BOOK (pages ____ to ____)



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Step 4: Write a Letter: Your job is to write a letter to Martin Ganda and Caitlin Alifirenka about what this book has taught you about the value of education. First, explain what this book has taught you about the need and value of education. Why shouldn't we take this privilege for granted? Has education been important to you? Is education now a priority for you after reading this book? What has learning about Caitlin and Martin's experiences taught you about taking your own education seriously? Answer the reflection question in thoughtful, complete sentences. Your response should be written in paragraph form.

Dear Mr. Ganda and Ms. Alifirenka,

My name is ...and I am from Berkshire Jr/Sr High School located in Burton, Ohio. We were asked to read *I Will Always Write Back: I will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives* and I admit that this book affected me in many ways.

Sincerely,

Your Name