



# Morris County School of Technology

## Class of 2020

### Summer Reading Assignment

We are excited to welcome you into our classrooms in September and hope that you will enjoy your summer reading assignment. As part of the English I course during freshman year, you will read nonfiction texts written by authors who have experienced different walks of life. Transitioning to high school can be challenging at times, but can be made easier by reading about those that have already overcome challenges in their own lives. Your reading selections for this year's assignment provide you an opportunity to reflect on success in the face of adversity.

#### **Reading Assignment**

Analyzing and discussing literature is a key component of the English classes at Morris County School of Technology and we hope that this assignment will allow you to do just that. **Choose one book from the list below** and spend your summer actively engaging with the text. Active reading is an important skill and we encourage note-taking while reading. Mark up your book with comments by recording them on sticky notes and placing them accordingly in the text, or keep a reading journal that will allow you to reflect on what you have read. Notes should include comments on literary elements such as setting, characters, point of view, plot, mood, theme, motive, conflict, and symbolism, as well as points that intrigue, confuse, or inspire you. We have provided you with some guided questions to help you focus on these elements.

During the first week of school your English teacher will provide you with an opportunity to discuss the readings you have completed, and to reflect upon them in a written format. You will be permitted to use both the book and any notes you have taken to help you recall details. In addition, **the Reading Guide must be completed and submitted on the first day of school for a grade.**

#### **Book Selections**

##### **1. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer**

"Though he was not in a classroom, William continued to think, learn—and dream. Armed with curiosity, determination, and a library book he discovered in a nearby library, he embarked on a daring plan—to build a windmill that could bring his family the electricity only two percent of Malawians could afford. Using scrap metal, tractor parts, and blue-gum trees, William forged a crude yet working windmill, an unlikely hand-built contraption that would successfully power four light bulbs and two radios in his family's compound. Soon, news of his invention spread, attracting interest and offers of help from around the world. Not only did William return to school but he and was offered the opportunity to visit wind farms in the United States, much like the ones he hopes to build across Africa.

A moving tale of one boy's struggle to create a better life, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* is William's amazing story—a journey that offers hope for the lives of other Africans—and the whole world, irrefutably demonstrating that one individual can make a difference" (New York, Harper Collins).

**2. *October Sky*, by Homer Hickam, Jr.**

“It was 1957, the year *Sputnik* raced across the Appalachian sky, and the small town of Coalwood, West Virginia, was slowly dying. Faced with an uncertain future, Homer Hickam nurtured a dream: to send rockets into outer space. The introspective son of the mine’s superintendent and a mother determined to get him out of Coalwood forever, Homer fell in with a group of misfits who learned not only how to turn scraps of metal into sophisticated rockets, but how to sustain their hope in a town that swallowed its men alive. As the boys began to light up the starry skies with their flaming projectiles and dreams of glory, Coalwood, and the Hickams, would never be the same” (New York, Dell).

**3. *Swimming to Antarctica: Tales of a Long-Distance Swimmer*, by Lynne Cox**

"At age sixteen, legendary swimmer Lynne Cox reached her lifetime goal of setting a new world record for an English Channel swim. So she set her goals even higher: She became the first to swim the Strait of Magellan, narrowly escaped a shark attack off the Cape of Good Hope, and was cheered across the twenty-mile Cook Strait of New Zealand by dolphins. Her daring eventually led her to the thirty-eight degree waters of the Bering Strait, which she crossed in her usual outfit – just a swimsuit, cap, and goggles. She even swam a mile in the iceberg-choked seas of the Antarctic. With a poet’s eye for detail, Cox shares the beauty of her time in the water in this new classic of sports memoir, now illustrated with photos and maps throughout" (New York, Harcourt Inc.).

**4. *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster*, by John Krakauer**

"This is the terrifying story of what really happened that fateful day at the top of the world, during what would be the deadliest season in the history of Everest. In this harrowing yet breathtaking narrative, Krakauer takes the reader along with his ill-fated expedition, step by precarious step, from Kathmandu to the mountain's pinnacle where, plagued by a combination of hubris, greed, poor judgment, and plain bad luck, they would fall prey to the mountain's unpredictable fury (New York, Anchor Books).

**5. *Life Is So Good*, by George Dawson and Richard Glaubman**

"In this remarkable book, George Dawson, a 103-year-old slave's grandson who learned to read at age 98, reflects on his life and offers valuable lessons in living and a fresh, firsthand view of American during the twentieth century. Richard Glaubman captures Dawson's irresistible voice and view of the world, offering insights into humanity, history, hardships, and happiness. From segregation and civil rights, to the wars and the presidents, to defining moments in history, George Dawson's description and assessment of the last century inspire readers with the message that-through it all-has sustained him: 'Life is so good. I do believe it's getting better' "(New York, Penguin Books).

# Summer Reading Assignment

## Reading Guide

Please answer completely the following questions in **complete sentences** by either **downloading** this sheet from the MCST website **or creating a Word document/Google document** with the questions listed. Bring the **completed, typed assignment** to English class and **its accompanying components** on the **first day of school**.

### Characterization

1. Who is the main character?
2. What kind of person is this character?
3. Which character changed the most in the book? In what ways did he or she change?
4. Choose 5 pieces of textual evidence that exhibit the main character's strengths during difficult times (please include page numbers).

### Setting

4. Where and when does the story take place?

### Theme

5. Determine and explain one theme that exists in your book. Identify two pieces of evidence from your book that portray this theme. Include page numbers.

### Making Connections

6. Find a text (news article, scholarly article, blog, or poem) that connects to an existing theme in your book.
  - a. Print out this text.
  - b. Be sure to include its URL (if applicable) on your copy.
  - c. Highlight 2 pieces of evidence in the text that support its connection.
7. Find another form of media (see below) that connects to an existing theme in your book
  - a. Options: painting, sculpture, political cartoon, graph, or picture
  - b. Explain in a complete sentence (at least 7 sentences) its connection to your book's theme.