

Grade 8 Optional Summer Assignments

History – Mrs. MacKnight

There will be no required work for History this summer. In the past you had the option of sending me a postcard if you visited a historical site or traveled somewhere interesting, but that might be difficult to accomplish this summer. If you are able to safely travel and would like to send me a letter or postcard please do! You're also more than welcome to write me a letter, postcard, or email about anything you've read or watched on a historical topic!

As you all know I am a huge history nerd so I've included some links below to websites if you would like some additional resources this summer! And if you have any ideas for topics to cover or activities for next year please feel free to share them with me! You know how much I love tailoring classes to fit your interests!

School Address for letters or postcards

Mrs. MacKnight
1417 West Braddock Road
Alexandria, VA 22302

Online Resources

American History for Kids	https://www.americanhistoryforkids.com
Mr. Nussbaum Learning + Fun	https://mrnussbaum.com/history
PBS Learning	https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/subjects/social-studies/us-history/
Kid Citizen	https://www.kidcitizen.net
Slave Voyages	https://www.slavevoyages.org

Literature – Mrs. Regelbrugge

Read one of Shakespeare's plays...we usually read ***The Merchant of Venice*** by William Shakespeare as required summer work before 8th grade, but we will undertake this together at the start of the year. Feel free to start this play over the summer or select another play. Try to read the real play, but feel free to get a ***No Fear Shakespeare*** version or a children's book version of any play you read. Digital and audio copies of Shakespeare's plays are available through the Folger Shakespeare Library:

<https://shakespeare.folger.edu/>. The plays have lots of unfamiliar, difficult vocabulary, and the style of writing is challenging. Still, our rising 8th graders always do a great job understanding the play. Many books have definitions of words as you go, so getting the real books can be an advantage. Also, I always encourage students to make use of Spark Notes and other resources to gain additional support for their understanding of the plot, characters, and themes.

General Advice for Summer – READ, READ, READ!!! Effective ongoing preparation for the High School Placement Test is to **read voraciously** (which means to read lots and lots of books and look up and learn new vocabulary as you go) and to **practice basic arithmetic so you are nimble with computation** and general math facts. Spending time this summer on these two areas of preparation will serve you well in the HSPT!

Science – Mrs. Regelbrugge

The following are opportunities for summer exploration. The items below ARE NOT required. This science can be submitted as extra credit assignments (up to a max of 15 points each).

Option 1 - Science in the Summer

Usually I encourage students to visit a science or discovery museum, a nature center, a National Park, or an outdoor museum such as a botanical garden or zoo and spend some time investigating the exhibits and /or speaking with the park ranger or docent. Since many of these options won't be open this summer, take virtual trips, do some science experiments at home, or keep a nature journal. I've given some suggestions about places that have great virtual material. To receive extra credit, you'll do a one-page (200-300 words) written paper giving specific information and descriptions about what you did and where, what you observed and learned, and what you found most fascinating. Photos and/or drawings are welcome additions. If you keep a nature journal this summer, then you'll turn in that journal for me to review instead of doing a one-page paper.

Some really interesting places to visit virtually are the Exploratorium, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and virtual tours available for many national parks. Visit places (virtually) in other parts of the world too! If you like experiments, there are lots of online resources and kits (e.g., Steve Spangler). If you keep a nature journal, make observations, draw pictures, gather data, ask questions, and make connections.

Option 2 - Reading and Writing about Real Scientists

Read a biography or autobiography about a scientist or inventor. Write a five-paragraph essay that includes:

- Your name, "8th Grade Optional Summer Science Work", name of scientist;
- Introductory paragraph including when and where the scientist lived and why he / she is significant (why there are books about him/her);
- One paragraph summarizing highlights from his/her life (scientific work and achievements);
- One paragraph describing any particular challenges the scientist faced (personally or in the work);
- One paragraph about how his/her life is similar to and /or different from your own;
- A closing paragraph that tells what you found most interesting about that scientist.
- Include a bibliographic citation: title, author, publisher, and publishing date of book.

Any optional Summer Science work you complete should be turned in to Mrs. R on the first day of science class (or emailed to lregelbrugge@bssva.org).