

### **8th Grade:**

The first quarter theme in Literature is Rites of Passage: What are some milestones on the path of growing up? The following titles provide students with another perspective on the topic of rites of passage, touching on many of the ideas found within the first quarter theme.

### **Required for all 8th Graders: The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch**

A touching and poignant memoir and biography by Pausch, who narrates his last days after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. This is an uplifting and motivating story of a common man who suddenly finds that his living days are now numbered.

### **In addition, choose one of the following:**

*All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque

In this classic novel, Paul and his friends enlist in the army. They face more than they expected as they fight battles during WW1. Paul and his comrades become thoroughly disillusioned with the notions of war's glory, and they come to accept the role of random chances in their lives.

*The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros

This coming-of-age novel tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, whose neighborhood is one of harsh realities and harsh beauty. Esperanza doesn't want to belong -- not to her rundown neighborhood, and not to the low expectations the world has for her.

*Rules of the Road* by Joan Bauer

Jenna Boller is the best employee at her branch of Gladstone's Shoes — she can sell anybody anything. But her family problems are harder to handle, and there are times when Jenna wishes she could just get out of town and take a break. So, when Madeline Gladstone, the elderly president of Gladstone Shoe Stores, hires Jenna as her driver for the summer, Jenna leaps at the change — right into the driver's seat. And that begins a cross-country adventure from Chicago to Dallas, where she and Mrs. Gladstone learn a lot about the rules of the road...and the rules of life.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

I am very much looking forward to having you again in class next year and hope that you have an enjoyable summer! To get us off to a good start, you will need to read the following:

***The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch and one other book from the Summer Reading List**

**The Last Lecture Assignment:** While reading *The Last Lecture*, reflect on the lessons learned from Pausch's inspiring final lecture. Your responses should be typed and free of grammatical and spelling errors.

### **All projects must include:**

1. COVER page: Include title and your name.

a. A: Create a sketch of your dream wall. It should include at least 5 things that matter to you. (You will be graded on effort and creativity.

Some of us are artistically challenged. You will not be marked down for lack of artistic talent.)

b. B. On the first page of your project, explain each of the objects on your wall and their significance to you.

(Note: Randy Rausch discusses his dream wall in Chapter 5.)

2. “\*Your choice” questions: Choose **5** of the questions to answer. They must be at least ½ page each (12-point Times New Roman Font Double Spaced).

You may include artwork.

3. Life list – Make a list of at least 10 items that you hope to accomplish in your life. You may include artwork.

### **Checklist:**

- ☐ Cover: Name, title of work, and sketch of dream wall with at least 5 objects
- ☐ 1st page: explanation of objects on your cover page
- ☐ Answers to 5 questions (1/2 page each in 12-point Times New Roman Font

Double Spaced)

☐ Life list

\*Choose 5 of the following to answer in your journal. Must be at least ½ page each in 12-point Times New Roman Font Double Spaced. You also may include artwork.

1. Write about one of your goals in life that seems impossible.
2. Explain one piece of valuable advice you have received from your parents.
3. "It [football] helped make me who I am today." (Page 35) – What is the "it" in your life.

Describe your "IT."

A. What is the history of "it"? How long has "it" been in your life? How was "it" introduced?

B. Describe your commitment to "it"? How does "it" impact your life?

C. What are the sacrifices you have made for "it"? What rewards have you received from "it"?

4. "Giving kids self-esteem. It's not something you can give. It's something they have to build... He knew there was only one way to teach kids how to develop it: You give them something they can't do, they work hard until they find they can do it, and you just keep repeating the process... He made me realize that if I work hard enough, there will be things I can do tomorrow that I can't do today." (Page 37) Describe something in your life that raised your self-esteem because you could not do it, but with hard work you accomplished it.

5. "So that was my setback. But I kept my mantra in mind: The brick walls are there for a reason. They're not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something." (Page 51-52) Describe a brick wall you encountered and the steps you took to show how badly you wanted something.

6. "Wow, this is the epitome of a person appreciating this day and this moment." (Page

- 64) Identify a person who you know who “appreciates” life the most and explain why.
7. “Like many people, I had strengths that were also flaws.” (Page 67) Do a little self-reflection and evaluate yourself analyzing a strength that also might be considered a weakness. What is your greatest weakness?
8. “Go on those trips you’ve always wanted to take.” Where is someplace you have always wanted to visit and hope to get there someday? (Include picture)
9. “I’m a scientist who sees inspiration as that ultimate tool for doing good.... When you’re putting people on the moon; you’re inspiring all of us to achieve the maximum human potential, which is how the greatest problems will be solved.” (Page 132-133) What inspires you? What is your inspiration?
10. “Too many people go through life complaining about their problems...Complaining does not work as a strategy. We all have finite time and energy. Any time we spend whining is unlikely to help us achieve our goals. And it won’t make us happier.” (Page 138-139) Evaluate your level of complaining. Do you complain often or do you look on the bright side? What do you complain about? Do you think if you complain less you would be happier?
11. “Being able to work well in a group is a vital and necessary skill in both the work world and in families. As a way to teach this, I’d always put my students into teams to work on projects.” (Page 142) How well do you work with others? Do you enjoy group work? Why or why not?
12. “Experience is what you get when you don’t get what you wanted. And experience is often the most valuable thing you have to offer.” (Page 149) Describe an experience where you gained experience. What was the event and the lesson that was learned?
13. “There are a few key moments in anyone’s life.” (Page 173) Select a one key moment from your life and describe the moment and the significance in your life.
14. Okay. So, which one are you: a Tigger or Eeyore? And why? If you’d like to be more of a Tigger, how might you go about that?