

## Mrs. Kittle's Reading Ladder, Quarter 3

### 1. Order by most to least difficult #1-44 (\*\* Quarter 3 books)

1. *Building a Reading Life: stamina, fluency, and engagement* by Lucy Calkins & Kathleen Tolan, 252 pp.
2. *Proust and The Squid: The Science of the Reading Brain* by Maryann Wolf, 336 pp.
3. *Why Don't Students Like School: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What it Means for the Classroom* by Daniel T. Willingham, 180 pp.
4. *Read to Write: a writing process reader* by Donald Murray, 608 pp.
5. *Last Night in Twisted River* by John Irving, 592 pp.
6. *Columbine* by Dave Cullen, 432 pp.
7. *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work* by Edwidge Danticat, 208 pp.
8. *Old Friend From Far Away: The Practice of Writing Memoir* by Natalie Goldberg, 336 pp.
9. *The Complete Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, 352 pp.
10. *Waiting for Superman: How We Can Save America's Failing Public Schools*, ed. Karl Weber, 288 pp.
11. *Hidden Gems: Naming and Teaching from the Brilliance in Every Student's Writing* by Katherine Bomer, 216 pp.
12. *Conferring: the Keystone of Reader's Workshop* by Patrick Allen, 204 pp.
13. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer, 368 pp.
14. *Everything is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer, 288 pp.
15. *War Dances* by Sherman Alexie, 208 pp.
16. *The Hotel at the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford, 304 pp.
17. *The Other Wes Moore: one name, two fates* by Wes Moore, 272 pp.
18. *Have You Found Her: a memoir* by Janice Erlbaum, 348 pp.
19. *Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay, 320 pp.
20. *Zeitoun* by Dave Eggers, 368 pp.
21. *Incendiary* by Chris Cleave, 272 pp.
22. *Instead of a Letter* by Diana Athill, 237 pp.
23. *Freedom* by Jonathan Franzen, 576 pp.
24. *Forge* by Laurie R. King, 304 pp.
25. *Day Into Night* by Anita Diamant, 304 pp.
26. *The Anatomy of Wings* by Karen Foxlee, 384 pp.
27. *The Fifth Rule* by Don Aker, 292 pp.
28. *Emma* by Jane Austen, 464 pp.
29. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini, 432 pp.
30. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne, 224 pp.
31. *Last Night in Montreal* by Emily St. John Mandel, 256 pp.
32. *Hold Still* by Nina LaCour, 256 pp.
33. *Sweet Hereafter* by Angela Johnson, 128 pp.
34. *Make Me a Story: Teaching Writing Through Digital Storytelling* by Lisa Miller, 98 pp.
35. *Notebook Connections: Strategies for the Reader's Notebook* by Aimee Buckner, 152 pp.
36. *How to Catch a Shark: and other Stories about Teaching and Learning* by Donald Graves, 144 pp.
37. *Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers, 336 pp.
38. *My Father's Summers* by Kathi Appelt, 208 pp.
39. *Discover Your Own Literacy* by Donald Graves, 176 pp.

40. *It's Kind of a Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini, 484 pp.
41. *The Miles Between* by Mary Pearson, 272 pp.
42. *Shooting Kabul* by N.H. Senzai, 272 pp.
43. *\*\*The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman, 312 pp.
44. *\*\*The Poet Slave of Cuba: a biography of Juan Francisco Manzano* by Margarita Engle, 208 pp.

**Why this order?** *Building a Reading Life* took me forever to read. It is really dense. I started this in January and just finished it. If it wasn't an assignment for a class I'm teaching, I probably wouldn't have finished it. I learned a lot, but it was slow going. Same with *Read to Write*, although he is a favorite author and I'm using his research to understand my own. Still, really a long book with lots to think about. Other books were hard for different reasons. Like *Columbine* was hard because the subject matter is, but *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* was hard because there are two stories going on and it took a bit of thinking to keep them straight. Also, I found the 9-year-old kind of annoying at first and had to get through that. The last two were written for younger kids so I found them easy to whip through.

## 2. Top 5 books and a brief reason why.

This quarter: *Columbine*, *The Other Wes Moore*, *Why Don't Students Like School?*, *Day Into Night*, and *How to Catch a Shark*. I loved the mastery of literary non-fiction in *Columbine*. I call this the modern *In Cold Blood*. I learned so much, but I also didn't want to quit reading. I would love to write a book like this. The same was true for *The Other Wes Moore*. He's a good writer and it struck me like "The Wire" which was one of my favorite TV series. I learned new ways to think about brain research in *Why Don't Students Like School?* and enjoyed talking about it with the teachers taking my graduate class. *Day Into Night* is a great story from a great writer. I read a lot about the Holocaust. And lastly, *How to Catch a Shark* was written by a dear friend of mine who died last fall, and I just loved listening to his voice again.

## 3. Total pages read Q3: 5250 / 9 (weeks in the quarter) = 583 pages a week

My reading rate varies greatly depending on the difficulty of the book. However, I am a fast reader. This quarter I read a ton—20 books. I know it is because we had winter break and Feb. break + I read more in the winter because I like to lay on the couch with my dog and stay out of the wind.

## 4. Compare your Q1, Q2, and Q3 pages/week and comment on what you notice.

I read 201 pages a week first quarter, 242 pages a week Q2, and now 583 pages a week this quarter. The reason? Winter. I do think the more you read the faster you read and the more you seek good books, which makes you want to read. I am currently reading *The Imprefectionists* and love it so much I'll probably finish it before the end of the quarter. That's what makes me read—something written so well that I want to get back to reading and find out how it ends. In this case, the writer is weaving together this really interesting story through short chapters by a whole newsroom full of personalities and I'm watching them all come together. Really a smart book.

## 5. Quarter 3 goals: did you meet them?

- Continue reading a variety of genres, including research into teaching, writing, and reading. **YES!**

- Read Dostoevsky: *Crime & Punishment* (Russian literature is always challenging for me, although wonderful) so I can talk to Jacob about it. **UH... NO. DIDN'T START.**
- Read *Wolf Hall* (It's a huge 560 pp., so it scares me, but I want to read it because it won the Booker Prize and beat out my favorite *Little Bee*.) **NO. DIDN'T START.**
- My goal this quarter is to read less, actually, and write more. I have a book that is due and I'm missing my deadlines. **Really blew this one—hardly worked on the book at all. And I read more than ever. Oops.**

#### **6. Quarter 4 goals: FINISH STRONG!**

- *Wolf Hall*
- *Crime & Punishment*

#### **7. Essay... attach a separate sheet**

Using evidence from your own engagement with reading this year, take a side and argue well in response to the prompt below... remembering that good argument presents both sides and considers the opposition's arguments as well as his/her own.

Does choice matter? Has it mattered to you? Why?