

***NATIONAL SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE
REDBOOK TOP 150 HIGH SCHOOL
HUTCHINSON CENTRAL TECHNICAL H. S.***

Buffalo NY 14201

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The 2007 and 2008 New York State report cards place HCTHS in the top tier of high schools in WNY. In order to maintain this standing, and to increase the number of students achieving distinction in the study of English and Social Studies, the faculty has initiated a reading requirement for all students. The reading lists were implemented with the following intentions:

1. To meet GOALS 2000 LEARNING STANDARDS for reading and writing with regard to information processing, comprehension, analysis, and evaluation.
2. To enhance literacy, and to enrich historical and cultural awareness.
3. To improve individual performance on the English Language Assessment(ELA) and Social Studies exams
4. To improve verbal scores on the SAT.
5. To encourage reading for recreation.
6. To set a serious tone for academic planning and study.

The contents of these books will be the focal point for instruction for the first marking period.

Students must read the required books and one other choice for the grade level.

Sumer reading for incoming **freshmen**:

Required for English – Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

Required for Social Studies – Persepolis, The Story of a Childhood by Marjane Satropi

Choices – The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night by Mark Haddon

Red Scarf Girl by Ji Li Jiang

When I Was Puerto Rican by Esmeralda Santiago

Summer reading for incoming **sophomores**:

Required for English – The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

Required for Social Studies – Night by Elie Wiesel

Choices – The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents by Julia Alvarez

Kindred by Octavia Butler

Summer reading for incoming **juniors**:

Required for English – Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Meyers

Required for Social Studies – The Jungle by Upton Sinclair

Choices – The Autobiography of Malcolm X with Alex Haley

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd

Summer reading for **Advanced Placement English Language** – to be read in place of the book required for English:

The Greatest Generation by Tom Brokaw

You must see Mr. Potter before the end of the school year to pick up the summer assignment packet for this book.

Summer reading for incoming **seniors**:

Required for English - The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

Required for Social Studies - Animal Farm by George Orwell

Choices – Between a Rock and a Hard Place by Aron Ralston

The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger

You must download and answer the questions for the Required book for English, and for the choice book you select. These answer papers are due when you return in September.

GUIDED READING QUESTIONS FOR THE GLASS CASTLE

Due on the day you return to school in September, 2009

1. The first story Walls tells of her childhood is that of burning herself severely at age three, and of her father taking her away from the hospital. Why do you think she opens with that story? How does it set the stage for the rest of the memoir?
2. Rex Walls often asks his children, “Have I ever let you down?” Why was this question, and its required response, so important to him and to his children? On what occasions does he actually not let them down?
3. Jeannette’s mother insists that, no matter what, “life with your father was never boring.” What kind of man is Rex Walls? What were his strengths and weaknesses, his flaws and contradictions?
4. Discuss the type of person Rose Mary Walls is. What do you think of her description of herself as an “excitement addict”?
5. Although it portrays an incredibly difficult life, The Glass Castle is not sad or self-pitying. Explain what you think is the tone of the book, and discuss how Walls achieves this effect.
6. Describe Jeannette’s relationships with her siblings. Discuss the roles they play in each others’ lives.
7. In college, Jeannette is singled out by a professor as not understanding the plight of homeless people. Instead of defending herself, she keeps quiet. Why do you think she does this?
8. The two major sections of the memoir, one set in the desert and one in West Virginia, feel distinct from one another. What effect does such a big move have on the family, and on your reading of the story? How would you describe the shift in the book’s tone?
9. Were you surprised to learn that, as adults, Jeannette and her siblings remain close to their parents? Why or why not? Why do you think they stay close?
10. What character traits do you think Jeannette inherited from her parents? Offer supporting examples. How do those traits shape her life?
11. Despite everything, Jeannette refuses to condemn her parents. Were you able, as a reader, to remain equally nonjudgmental? Why or why not?
12. Which scenes in the book are the most memorable to you? Most shocking? Most inspiring? Funniest? Explain your answers.
13. Discuss the metaphor of the glass castle, and what it signifies to Jeannette and to her father. What does it signify that, just before leaving for New York, Jeannette tells her father she doesn’t believe he’ll ever build it? Explain.

All your answers should demonstrate a careful reading of the book, and a mastery of composition skills and Standard English usage.

STUDY QUESTIONS for *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*

Answer these questions in complete sentences and paragraphs. Support your answers using examples and details from the book.

- Much of the book is spent in flashback. What does a reader learn about Ralston in these flashbacks? What does he learn about himself? How do these flashbacks prepare the reader for the end of the story?
- What does the book tell us about the human instinct for survival? Do you think less of Ralston that, at times, he seems defeated? Why/why not?
- The cover of the book shows how Ralston escapes his predicament. Do you think the book would be improved if there were a greater sense of suspense, or do you appreciate learning how Ralston comes to grips with the inevitable? Are there other incidents that create suspense?
- Ralston uses many unfamiliar terms, and refers to unfamiliar places. Does that make the book more difficult, more interesting, or more realistic? How did you figure out what Ralston meant?
- Imagine Ralston as a father, explaining his story to his child. What lessons do you think he would say he learned from what he went through?