

One Crazy Summer

Summer Reading Journal Project

Grade 6

Required Reading: One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams Garcia

Duration: June-August 2015

About the Book:

Eleven-year-old Delphine has it together. Even though her mother, Cecile, abandoned her and her younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern, seven years ago. Even though her father and Big Ma will send them from Brooklyn to Oakland, California, to stay with Cecile for the summer. And even though Delphine will have to take care of her sisters, as usual, and learn the truth about the missing pieces of the past.

When the girls arrive in Oakland in the summer of 1968, Cecile wants nothing to do with them. She makes them eat Chinese takeout dinners, forbids them to enter her kitchen, and never explains the strange visitors with Afros and black berets who knock on her door. Rather than spend time with them, Cecile sends Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern to a summer camp sponsored by a revolutionary group, the Black Panthers, where the girls get a radical new education about the world, their mother, and themselves.

The Project

The Summer Reading Journal Project allows students to reflect on the novel as a whole. Students will create a journal based on the novel, which will include ten designated journal entries.

Materials needed:

- Required Reading book
- Composition Book (Journal)
- Various decorative materials for Journal Cover

The Journal: Over the course of the summer, students will write journal entries based on the provided prompts that relate to the novel. Students are required to decorate the cover of their journals (10 points) based on the

novel. Journal entries will either be personal or a reflection of the novels themes and characterization. Each journal entry will be:

- A reflective experience
- 10-20 minutes of writing
- Evaluated on grammar and thoughtful completion
- At least ten sentences
- Worth 10 points each (Total of 8=80 points)
- Written from a prompt provided by the teacher

The journal entries will be written from prompts provided. Students must include the writing prompts in their journals. Students are expected to write 10-20 minutes, depending on the writing prompt.

Journal Entry #1

Writing Prompt: How would you describe Delphine’s relationship with her sisters? How is it like your relationship with your sibling(s) or like the relationships of siblings you know? How is it different? What does Delphine mean when she says she enjoys her role as Vonetta and Fern’s “enemy and big sister”?

Journal Entry #2

Writing Prompt: What does Delphine expect from Cecile? Do her expectations differ from Vonetta’s and Fern’s expectations? Why? What word or words would you use to describe Cecile?

Journal Entry #3

Writing Prompt: What does Delphine decide about Oakland on her first night there? If you were in her place, would you have come to a similar conclusion? Have you ever felt similarly about a place you’ve visited? Did you discover anything that changed your mind?

Journal Entry #4

Writing Prompt: Are the Black Panthers Delphine observes at breakfast her first few mornings in Oakland like she expected them to be? How do Sister Mukumbu and Sister Pat differ from Delphine's expectations? What do you think she means when she says that "beating eggs never makes the evening news" (p. 64)?

Journal Entry #5

Writing Prompt: What elements in the story give you clues about the characters' personalities? Some of the characters have objects that are closely associated with them, like Delphine and her Timex, Cecile and her printing press, and Hirohito and his go-kart. What do these objects say about the characters? Can you find more examples of characters with close associations to objects in the story?

Journal Entry #6

Writing Prompt: Are Cecile and Delphine at all alike? How? How are they different? What does Cecile mean when she tells Delphine that it wouldn't kill her to be selfish (p. 110)?

Journal Entry #7

Writing Prompt: How does Delphine feel about the messages of the Black Panthers? Why does she want to stop taking her sisters to the People's Center and skip the rally? Do her beliefs about the Black Panthers and their messages change throughout the story? How would you have felt in her place?

Journal Entry #8

Writing Prompt: Do the sisters find what they were looking for on their trip to Oakland? Why, or why not?
