



2019 Pre-Early College Summer Assignments

Pre-early college is broken into the two semesters.

The second semester, students who qualify will take their first college class.

Semester 1 is Critical Thinking. We will spend the semester answering the following question.

What are the dangers when we, as human beings, ignore personal responsibility and neither confront nor acknowledge injustice?

This content will have us exploring the Rwandan Genocide as well as the Holocaust. For your summer reading assignment you are asked to read the following novel.

Thorn Thread by Anne Isaacs

It is June 1943, and for two years the Nazi armies have occupied the Polish town of Bedzin. Twelve-year-old Eva, along with her father and her sister, have been forced to leave their comfortable home and move into a tiny attic room in the Jewish ghetto.

Eva's life takes a terrifying turn when she and her sister are torn from their father and imprisoned in a Nazi work camp in Czechoslovakia. In the camp, Eva is forced to spin thread on treacherous machinery to make blankets and uniforms for the German army. As she struggles amid ever-worsening dangers to save her life and that of her sick sister, Eva's world tears apart like the weak threads of her spinning machine.

In this riveting account based on a true story, two teenagers strive to create a home and family for each other amidst inhumanity and chaos, sharing not only crusts of bread, but precious moments of love and laughter. What emerges is a deeply moving story, rich in detail and symbolism, where heartbreak and hope have been spun into a single, exquisite thread.

Once you have completed the novel, you need to complete two of the activities below. You may pick any two of your choice, however, they must be completed in full and should be written using proper writing techniques and should be more than one page in length.



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STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Compare three "reunion" scenes in *Torn Thread*: (1) when Eva and Rachel meet at the camp (pages 31–32); (2) after witnessing the death march, when Eva and Rachel share secrets and become closer (pages 133–134); and (3) when Rachel recovers from typhus (pages 180–181). How are the scenes different, how are they the same? What other reunion between sisters brings about the second "reunion"? In what way could each scene be described as "renewed life after a brush with death"?
2. Write a journal from the point of view of one of the main characters in the book.
3. Imagine you are Eva and have been commanded to write Papa after your arrival at the camp in Parschnitz. You know that Frau Hawlik will read and "censor" your letter. What do you say? Imagine you are Papa in the ghetto, writing to your daughters in the camp. Write a letter or series of letters from Eva to Papa, and write Papa's replies to Eva.
4. From your own life, write a true account of a time when you had a close call or an actual accident. Were there warnings? Did you heed them? How could your story have ended differently if you had or hadn't heeded them?
5. Interview an older member of your family. Ask them to tell you an important chapter in their life. Then set it down in writing and share it with the class.
6. Czech author Franz Kafka once said: "You can hold back from the suffering of the world; you have free permission to do so and it is in accordance with your nature, but perhaps this very holding back is the one suffering you could have avoided." What do you think Kafka meant by this? How are we all "citizens of the world," responsible for the sufferings of others? How does it relieve our suffering when we try to help others?

If you have any questions, please email Mr. Hardison at hardisonjl@duvalschools.org.