## Summer Reading Assignments

1. **The Contender by Robert Lipsyte**
2. **Extra Credit Book Report**
3. **If I Ever Get Out of Here by Eric Gansworth (see details on last page)**

## THE CONTENDER by Robert Lipsyte
## DUE: Thursday, August 29, for English Class

The novel titled above is your English summer reading assignment. Attached are study questions in connection with your reading. Please purchase a paperback copy of the book, which is available on-line and at most area bookstores. I encourage you to make notes in your book, highlighting significant portions of your reading to prepare for class discussions. If it fits into your summer plans, please wait until August to begin this assignment so that it remains fresh for our review. If you are too busy then to complete the assignment, by all means do it earlier, and then leave some time to go over your reading and responses before classes begin in August. On August 30, you will have an in-class write, based on your reading and your Study Questions. Therefore, be sure to make good notes.

This is a fast read as it is really a novella with subject matter that should engage you. Do give this assignment the time it deserves, however, as it will be my first impression of your English skills. Make it a good one!

**Directions:**
Please use the questions attached to this sheet as a reading guide by jotting down next to the questions notes that you can use during your in-class write and our class discussions in the fall.

Make sure you put a correct slug on top of your Study Questions, which should be in hard copy, with notes either typed or in cursive.

**Scroll down for Study Questions.**

# THE CONTENDER
## Study Questions

**Chapter 1**
1. What information does Alfred give to his friends that gets them into trouble?
2. What guilt feelings does Alfred have and why?

**Chapter 2**
1. Why did the author include a description of the television program Alfred watched?
2. What is Alfred's motivation to go to Donatelli's Gym for the first time?

**Chapter 3**
1. Describe three things that Alfred learns on his first visit to the gym.

**Chapter 4**
1. What differences are there between the life Alfred leads in Harlem and the one his relatives lead on Long Island? Give examples.
2. Why doesn't the author make Uncle Wilson the major influence in Alfred's life?

**Chapter 5**
1. What does running in the morning do for Alfred?
2. Why does he want to keep it a secret?

**Chapter 6**
1. Describe a few things that exist or happen at the gym which you think might become important to Alfred.

**Chapter 7**
1. Why is Spoon an important character to include in this novel?
2. What emotional effect does the very end of the chapter have on the reader? How does the author create this effect?

**Chapter 8**
1. What has enabled Alfred to make the decision he does in response to Major's request?

**Chapter 9, Chapter 10, and Chapter 11**
1. Why is Aunt Pearl so upset about Alfred's new "career"?
2. What advice does Alfred get from Mr. Epstein?
3. Why does Alfred decide to go back to the clubroom?
4. Why does Alfred fall apart once he is there?

**Chapter 12**
1. Why does Alfred make the decision to continue boxing?

**Chapter 13 and Chapter 14**
1. How does Donatelli decide that Alfred is ready for his first fight?
2. What part of Alfred's pre-fight afternoon is most significant to you? Why?
3. Why is Alfred's winning not enough for Mr. Donatelli?

**Chapter 15**
1. What in her past does Aunt Pearl reveal to Alfred? Why?

**Chapter 16**
1. What would Alfred's old school friends like him to do for them?
2. Why does he decide to go to the movies (as opposed to relaxing elsewhere)?

**Chapter 17**
1. What are the differences in Uncle Wilson's hopes for his son and for Alfred?
2. What are Jeff's aspirations for himself? How do they connect with Alfred?

**Chapter 18 and Chapter 19**
1. Why does Donatelli think Alfred should retire?
2. What does Alfred learn about being a contender?
3. Why does Alfred need to fight once more?
4. What does Donatelli mean by, "Now you know, Alfred. Now you know, too."?

**Chapter 20**
1. What is the significance of Alfred helping James?

**General Concerns**
1. What do you believe is one major theme in this novel?
2. List four MINOR characters and indicate what they contribute to that theme.
3. What is the significance of the title?

**Scroll down for Extra Credit Assignment**

**Extra Credit Summer Assignment**

**IN ADDITION TO COMPLETING THE ASSIGNMENTS ABOVE, YOU MAY EARN UP TO 5 POINTS OF EXTRA CREDIT BY READING AND COMPLETING THE BOOK REPORT FORM BELOW ON ONE OF THE FOLLOWING** (or another book on the school Summer Reading List or one approved by Mrs. Gigounas, Mrs. Walker or Ms. Esling ) Please DO NOT choose To Kill a Mockingbird or Lord of the Flies as these are books we will be reading as class novels this year.

Beyond the Chocolate War-Robert Cormier
The Boys from St. Petri-Bjarne Reuter
The Berlin Boxing Club-Robert Sharenow
The Book Thief-Markus Zusak
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas-John Boyne
The Call of the Wild-Jack London
Chains-Laurie Halse Anderson
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time-Mark Haddon
Divergent-Veronica Roth
Ender's Game (any in the series)-Orson Scott Card
Farenheit 451-Ray Bradbury
The Glory Field-Walter Dean Myers
Hunger Games (any in the series)-Suzanne Collins
In the Middle of the Night-Robert Cormier
Into the Wild-Jon Krakauer
Ironman-Chris Crutcher
Let the Circle Be Unbroken-Mildred D. Taylor
Love Among the Walnuts-Jean Ferris
The Man Who Was Poe-Avi
The Martian Chronicles-Ray Bradbury
The Maze Runner (any in the series)-James Dashner
Monster-Walter Dean Myers
Of Mice and Men-John Steinbeck
The Outsiders (or any of the sequels)-S.E.Hinton
The Pigman's Legacy-Paul Zindel
Shade's Children (or any sequels)-Garth Nix
Skellig-David Almond
A Solitary Blue-Cynthia Voigt
Somewhere in the Darkness-Walter Dean Myers
The Trouble with Lemons-Daniel Hayes
Waiting for the Rain-Sheila Gordon
The Wave-Todd Strasser


**Scroll down for Book Report questions.**

# SUMMER READING-EXTRA CREDIT REPORT

**Title**_____

**Author**_____

**Copyright Date**_____ **No. of Pages**_____

**Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper *on top of which this sheet should be attached.* Please do on computer or write in cursive in dark blue or black ink. REMEMBER THAT LITERATURE IS DISCUSSED IN THE PRESENT TENSE.**

**1.** A one -paragraph plot summary of the book, not to exceed 150 words. Please include the setting in this section and identify the main problem(s) faced by the character(s) in this book.

**2.** Choose three major characters, describe them, explaining their role in the story, their character traits, any pertinent physical description, and any other important points.

**3.** Pick the character who is most like you. If no one fits this description, pick the character who is most unlike you. Write three sentences giving your reasons for choosing the character you did.

**4.** Select one episode or scene that stands out for you. Describe briefly and explain why it is memorable.

**5.** Of what value do you believe this book is for readers of your age? Be honest with your evaluation of its importance, but explain, with specifics, why you think as you do.

**Scroll down for <u>If I Ever Get Out of Here</u> assignment**

**If I Ever Get Out of Here** by Eric Gansworth will be your October book report. It will not be a written one. Instead, you will be presenting a section of the book for your classmates with your First Quarter Response Group. All of this will be assigned in detail when you return to school and have your group. You will have time to read this when you return, but if you have some time during the summer, I think you will enjoy getting a head start. It is a book with themes that deal with racism, poverty, friendship, and the coming of age of a seventh-grader. The story is set in 1975 on the Tuscarora Indian Reservation in northern New York state. If you do decide to begin this summer, please just enjoy the read without worrying about writing down notes, etc.

See you in August!