

June 2024

Dear Boston Prep 8th grade Students and Families,

As we close out this school year, we hope you all are well, and enjoying the warm summer sunshine.

At Boston Prep, reading and discussing rich, grade-level text is part of the core work we do each day. While reading for class is required, more importantly, we want all students to continually grow as readers and see their identities represented in what they read. One way we do this is through our summer reading program. In the books we assign over the summer months, we hope to foster a true love of reading with texts that are engaging and relevant.

We know that reading and discussing text is a crucial skill required for success in school, college and beyond. Reading during the summer preserves reading skills learned during the school year¹, as research shows that students who read over the summer retain more of what they learned during the school year and are more prepared for the grade level they are advancing into. Boston Prep is committed to raising up student voice in our classrooms and teaching students to do the hard thinking for themselves. Reading the texts over the summer helps to prepare our students for that challenging work ahead.

This summer we are asking students to complete different summer reading tasks at each level of middle school. In 8th grade, students will read one historical fiction book to cover both ELA and History: *American Street* by Ibi Zoboi. In choosing this text, we hope that students are able to continue to foster a love of reading, and engage with some topics that they will encounter throughout the 8th grade curriculum. In addition to reading the text, all middle school students are asked to complete additional tasks while reading over the summer to prepare for class activities focused on the books during the first weeks of school.

As students read this summer, below are some suggested ways for families to engage with the texts and enjoy reading together:

- Pick a time to read with your student and discuss the events, topics or ideas that are detailed in the section you read.
- Ask your student to share a summary of their daily reading with you, perhaps over a meal.
- Suggest to your student that they take pictures of favorite parts of the text to share them with their new teacher as a way to introduce themselves.
- Invite your student to reach out to their peers to read together, or discuss parts of the text.
- Look out for summer opportunities to read together with Boston Prep peers!

All students should **plan to bring their summer reading books and materials to school the first day back!**

All summer reading information is also available on the school's website, www.bostonprep.org. We thank you for your continued support; if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Happy Reading!

Jenine Jeffreys, Middle School Principal
jjeffreys@bostonprep.org

Jenine Jeffreys

Greg Passineau, Middle School DCI Humanities
gpassineau@bostonprep.org

Greg Passineau

¹ Smith, Lorna. "Slowing the Summer Slide."

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educationalladership/dec11/vol69/num04/Slowing-the-Summer-Slide.aspx>

"A superb meditation on race, girls, struggle to find her way in a new world."
—Nicole Yoon, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Everything, Everything*

IBI ZOBOI

AMERICAN
STREET

8th Grade Humanities

Summer Reading Assignment

American Street by Ibi Zoboi

Ibi Zoboi draws on her own experience as a young Haitian immigrant, infusing this lyrical exploration of America with magical realism and *vodou* culture. On the corner of American Street and Joy Road, Fabiola Toussaint thought she would finally find *une belle vie*—a good life. But after they leave Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Fabiola's mother is detained by U.S. immigration, leaving Fabiola to navigate her loud American cousins, Chantal, Donna, and Princess; the grittiness of Detroit's west side; a new school; and a surprising romance, all on her own.

The Summer Reading Assignment, listed below, should be completed by the first day of school in preparation for discussion. Students should prepare to write about and discuss summer reading texts during the **first week of school**, and to use the text throughout the first unit, including the first assessment.

Assignment

All rising 8th graders will read *American Street* by Ibi Zoboi. As you read, use the **notetaking tracker below** to identify quotes that answer the essential question, identify the historical context of that quote, and share an explanation in your own words of how that quote answers one of the following **questions**:

1. How does the author use Creole and different forms of American English throughout the book? What does the use of either or both languages suggest about the characters in the novel? Do you connect to any of the languages (Creole or any of the forms of American English) spoken in the book? Do you speak those languages too? With which languages did you connect?
2. What are some similarities and differences between Detroit, Michigan and Port-au-Prince, Haiti? What are some similarities and differences between your hometown and Detroit, Michigan and Port-au-Prince, Haiti?
3. How does Fabiola change over the course of the novel? What are some events that facilitated these changes? *Consider Fabiola's connection to Haitian culture and identity.* Do you feel like you have changed over the course of your life in ways that Fabiola has changed? To which parts of your culture and identity does that connect?

As you read, complete the following:

- Annotate the text for historical context, main idea.
- Using sticky notes to note scenes, pages, or sentences that you find compelling, surprising, beautiful, or that provoke emotion (positive or negative) in some way.
- Pose questions that arise as you read.

Your teacher will check your note tracker and annotations on the first day of school. Be prepared to write an in-class essay answering one of the questions above! **You may use your notes and annotations to complete your essay!**

History Summer Reading Note Tracker

Direct Quotes with page numbers	Historical Context (<i>What events were happening around the time as described by the author in this section or elsewhere in the book?</i>)	<i>Explanation in your own words of how that quote answers one of the questions noted above:</i>
<p>MODEL: “We fold our immigrant selves into this veneer of what we think is African American girlhood. The result is more jagged than smooth. This tension between our inherited identities and our newly adopted selves filters into our relationships with other girls and the boys we love, and how we interact with the broken places around us.” — Ibi Zoboi, <i>American Street</i> (Authors notes section)</p>	<p>MODEL: The Author Ibi Zoboi is a Haitian-American author of young adult fiction novels. She was Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and migrated to Brunswick Brooklyn in the 1980's. Moving to American from Haiti was hard for Zoboi, she sharply remembers her experiences as a young girl where the American schools she attended placed her in ELD programs assuming she couldn't speak english, despite the fact she knew english well, and never officially testing her</p>	<p>MODEL: Ibi Zoboi is arguing that when you are a black migrant in America, especially as a young person, you often end up getting thrown into a new culture, usually an African American culture. Once there you adopt the behaviors, values, customs, and manners of speech of African American girls and boys. However, this is no more than just an act. This persona never fully becomes you. You are stuck between two cultures, the culture that's inside your house that comes from your families and friends from your cultural background, and the newly adopted culture that comes from African Americans. Ibi Zoboi experienced this herself when she came to American and was raised in Brooklyn with a lot of African American girls. Her culture was Haitian, and it was very different from the culture and experience of African Americans. However, she put on the mask and became her new self.</p>

