



**Peak to Peak
Charter School**
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May 2008

To the Parents and Guardians of Peak to Peak Sixth Graders:

Greetings from the South Building in Room 265! As the weeks wind down and your student's first year of middle school comes to a close, the Social Studies Department is already looking towards August and the next year of your child's academic growth. It is in this spirit that I have the distinct pleasure of introducing you to the summer reading requirement for American History, *Fever, 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson.

This delightful historical fiction piece takes us to Philadelphia during the second term of President George Washington as seen through the eyes of Matilda Cook. Mattie, while dressed in a bonnet and dreaming of running the Cook Coffeehouse at the tender age of fourteen, is a typical preteen whose relationship with her mother is strained and frets over the attentions of a young apprentice named Nathan. During the hot summer of 1793, Yellow Fever plagues the bustling capital city, and Mattie's world turns upside. Death and its destructive path plagues Mattie at every turn and it is through her pluck, kindness, and ultimate understanding of her fate that she lives her life through those dreadful summer months.

Fever, 1793 was chosen to be a part of the American History curriculum at Peak to Peak Charter School for its fantastic ability to personalize history and show character at its best. Mattie is a young woman of her times, but her story truly reaches out to the modern teenager with the question of "What would I have done?" Anderson paints the Yellow Plague in all its sickly hues, which is bound to grab the attention of even the most finicky readers. The level of the reading is age appropriate, and most students find it a fast, enjoyable read. The book is the perfect introduction to summer reading assignments for social studies!

For the summer reading assignment, students also need to complete a summer reading study guide. This packet can easily be downloaded from www.peaktopeak.org, our school's webpage. When students return to school in August, they should bring the completed packet with them and be ready to start their first unit.

For your convenience, Peak to Peak and Barnes and Noble will be holding a May book fair where families may purchase all the books needed for the upcoming school year. Watch for upcoming details from our librarians!

Thank you and I look forward to discussing this gripping book next year in American History!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Wilondek
7th Grade Social Studies Teacher

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Return to 2007-08 classroom teacher...

_____ and I read the
(Print student name.)

7th Grade Social Studies summer-reading letter, and we understand the expectations

Parent/guardian signature

Student signature

Date

***Fever, 1793* Study Guide**
7th Grade American History Summer Reading Assignment

**Please respond to three (3) of the following questions/statements to demonstrate your understanding of the novel *Fever, 1793*.
(Five to seven sentences for each, please.)**

A. What was Philadelphia like in 1793? What were the advantages and disadvantages of living in the countryside outside of Philadelphia?

B. How was the life of a 14-year-old in 1793 different from the life of a 14-year-old today? In which period would you rather live? Why?

C. Mattie's grandfather didn't think there was any need to rush out of Philadelphia when the fever started to spread. Why did some people think it was safe to stay? What would you have done?

D. The color yellow is used throughout the story. What does it symbolize? What other symbols are used in the book? (MINIMUM FOUR (4) EXAMPLES)

E. When does Mattie move from being a child to being a young adult? Why do you say this?

F. During the Revolutionary War, women took on tasks that were traditionally performed by men. After the War, they were expected to go back to their spinning wheels and kitchens. How are Mattie's dreams in conflict with what her society expected of young women? Why did Mattie's mother want a different life for her daughter?

G. The Free African Society volunteered to take care of the sick and bury the dead, even though there was no cure for yellow fever. How do you think they felt? Why did they do that? Would you have helped?

H. What comparisons can you make between life in Philadelphia during the epidemic and life in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein?