

# The Thinking Cap

Summer 2012

Volume 4, Issue 3

## Alexandra in Tutorland

alexandra's musings



**Another wonderful year!**

As students clean out lockers and stream out of the hallways for the last time before the summer holiday, we at Thinking Caps are taking some time to celebrate another extraordinary academic year. We are excited about all that we have accomplished and look forward to taking on new challenges to continue to improve the experiences of tutors, students and their families.

During the past year, TCT has continued to expand and update its resource library and training program. We moved our materials and resources to an online format so that tutors and students can access content and information quickly and easily. With Jessi Suzuki's leadership here at the office, we also updated our training program to include the newest teaching methods in addition to TCT's hallmark Study Skills Program. This way, we can ensure that our new team members and returning tutors are up-to-date on the latest in education.

TCT is working tirelessly to give students the opportunity to be critical thinkers and independent learners. We feel tremendously fortunate to be able to work with students in New York, Austin, and Houston. Throughout this year, we have been inspired by their hard work, energy, and achievements. We look forward to a wonderful summer and another great school year.

Wishing you and your family a summer full of fun and rest!



**Send your questions to:**

[info@thinkingcapstutoring.com](mailto:info@thinkingcapstutoring.com)

## Sense and Sensibility

you ask, we answer

**Question:** I'm starting to think about college applications and I'm wondering if there is something I can do over the summer to help get me prepared for the process?

**Answer:** Great question! Summer is a perfect time to get a jumpstart on the college application process. Many college prep websites like Princeton Review and College Board provide student questionnaires that help tailor college searches based on academic scores, social interests, and geographic preference. Start compiling a list of potential schools and make note of their GPA and standardized test score averages. These scores will help provide motivation for you once school starts back up in fall. If any of your choice schools are located nearby you can plan a summer visit and arrange for a campus tour.

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### Great Expectations

ü ThinkingCapsSummer programs begin in June. We will be in NYC, the Hamptons, Austin, and Houston.

ü Check us out on Facebook!

ü Listen to us on Doctor Radio on SiriusXM to hear great summer study tips.

ü Join our PageTurners book club.





# Much Ado About Learning

## our tips and helpful hints

**Not your typical reading list. Books that have inspired us.**

The *Power of One* by Bryce Courtenay is one of the most inspiring books I have ever read. The reader follows Peekay as he grows up with the burning desire to become the welterweight champion of the world. The book combines friendship, learning, self-reliance, and the racial complexities of South Africa beautifully. Through Peekay's struggles you learn that believing in your own power is everything.

—Holley Davis  
New York

I recommend *The Colour of Magic* by Terry Pratchett (the first book in the every expanding "Discworld" series). For a fantasy and humor fan, discovering Terry Pratchett was a revelation. Pratchett's "Discworld" series does far more than simply parody the vast wealth of fantasy classics. His colorful stories and frequently absurd characters are a vehicle for ingenious satire on all aspects of our often equally-as-absurd modern day reality.

—David Moroney  
New York

I recommend reading *1984*. Although the subject is a little bit dark, it's well written and very captivating. The powerful depiction of a dystopian government sparked my interest in political science. You'll be surprised how often its terminology and concepts pop up in popular culture.

—Anthony Radosevich  
Texas

For those seeking a mesmerizing, haunting read, I suggest Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. The novel's protagonist, searching for his missing wife, stumbles between reality and an unsettling dreamworld. The characters and situations he encounters on his search are bizarre, engrossing, and occasionally disturbing, making it hard for the reader to put the book down. But this is more than a page turner: it is a vehicle by which the author tackles the ugliness and hypocrisy of Japanese society, both past and present. *Wind-Up* is psychedelic, thrilling, and rife with symbolism—making it my favorite Murakami novel.

—Steven Foley  
New York



My book recommendation is *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norman Juster. This classic fantasy tale follows the adventures of Milo, a very bored boy who "doesn't know what to do with himself" until a car, a dog (a watchdog with a clock for a body, no less), and a toll-booth suddenly transport him to unknown worlds. Juster's wild imagination, creating new lands--the Dol-drums, the Forest of Sight, the Foothills of Confusion, the Sea of Knowledge--every five pages or so, should prove irresistible to kids. His sense of humor makes this an essential read for their parents, too.

—Dan Normandin  
New York

I'm a big fan of the series "Island" by Gordan Korman. If you've read *Hatchet*, this series is a great way to continue the theme of desert islands, shipwrecks, and characters who have to overcome very different challenges. I also love anything by Lois Lowry, specifically *The Giver* and *Number the Stars*.

—Valerie Carroll  
New York

For summer reading, I would recommend three books. If you want a classic, try *The Nick Adams Stories* by Ernest Hemingway. In this book are some incredibly sweet and lazy stories giving color to adolescence, many of which come from Hemingway's own childhood in northern Michigan. If you want a mystery that you won't be able to put down, try *I am the Messenger* by Markus Zusak. A riveting story about growing up and dealing with family issues, it's a great read that has won many awards. And finally, one of my favorites: *The Golden Compass*, by Phillip Pullman. The first of a trilogy, *The Golden Compass* will make you look at everything differently. Think Harry Potter, but better.

—Tim Stauffer  
New York

Set in the hazy summer nights of 1920s Long Island, *The Great Gatsby* is an excellent read for beach or poolside lounging. Fitzgerald portrays the manic celebration of American prosperity in the years following World War I. But beneath the champagne facade of Gatsby's fabulous parties lies a darker reality. Through a clever mix of subtext and symbolism, Fitzgerald conveys the decade's rising anxiety as the party draws to an inevitable end.

—Jeannie Fallon  
Texas





# A Tale of One Tutor

lessons we learned along the way



## A lesson in not giving up.

Math has always been my greatest strength in school, and I enjoyed it more than the average person. So when I came to college, and I realized I had no idea what I was going to do, I decided to be a math major. How hard could it be right? I went straight into Calculus 2 first semester of freshman year, and I really struggled. The teacher made me believe that I wasn't smart enough to be a math major. I barely got a B in the class (my first B in math) and I remember calling my mom and telling her that I needed to choose a new major. She told me to relax and to try taking another math class before giving up. (Also, she reminded me that a B in a class is not a bad grade.) So the next semester I took Calculus 3, and the teacher was a young, brilliant woman. Her story inspired me: a woman from Turkey who came to America to get a PhD in Math against her parents' wishes. She was the only woman at her school getting a Math PhD, but despite the odds, she persevered. She taught me that, even if the stereotypes are against you, follow your own path. I met with her every week to make sure I was learning the material, and in the end I got an A in the class. I realized that I was smart enough to be a math major, as long as I put in the effort. I learned to never give up because someone is discouraging me, and that I can do anything if I am determined.

—Christina Ludovici  
New York



# Cat's Cradle

tantalizing brain ticklers

Guess the word that is missing every other letter.



1. p \_ a \_

Hint: I am sweet and there are more than 3000 varieties of me.

2. c \_ a \_ k

Hint: you can find me a in classroom.



3. l \_ b \_ a \_ y

Hint: I'm full of pages.

4. b \_ a \_

Hint: you probably don't want to encounter me in the forest.

5. t \_ n \_ u \_

Hint: I'm an important muscle in your body.

6. h \_ r \_ e

Hint: a bus is a faster way to get around.



**Thinking Caps Tutoring** is an innovative, after-school educational company that helps students acquire the skills and confidence needed to succeed in school, college, and beyond. TCT, through an individualized, descriptive screening process, matches students with student tutors best capable of overcoming a child's weak points and emphasizing strengths. Services provided at TCT include subject tutoring, skills coaching, homework support, standardized test prep and more.

For more information about TCT or any of the programs, please call us at 917.779.8183 or send an email to [info@thinkingcapstutoring.com](mailto:info@thinkingcapstutoring.com).

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