



May 2016

Dear Incoming 8th grade GT students and parents,

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing our Gifted and Talented students with a challenging and rewarding curriculum, the Johnston Middle School Language Arts Department has created a summer reading program for our GT students. We believe summer reading will both enrich students and create a strong foundation for the reading and writing we will be doing during the 2016-17 school year. Over the summer, students will be required to read two books, Bruiser by Neal Shusterman and an optional choice from the provided list. The students will complete two projects that will account for a significant portion of the first six weeks grade. Both assignments are mandatory. These titles are available through the Houston Public Library system, Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com, or you might find them at Half-Price Books.

Required read:

Bruiser by Neal Shusterman

Shusterman has crafted a chilling and unforgettable novel about the power of unconditional friendship, the complex gear workings of a family, and the sacrifices we endure for the people we love.

Product for Bruiser – Due September 22/23, 2016

You may choose from one of the following ideas:

- Create a mobile representing the key events from the book, or
- Write a series of journal entries (minimum 8 entries consisting of 50 or more words per entry) for any of the characters that show his/her point of view about the main conflict in the story.

Assessment - 100 points

- 1 – Project is thrown together in a haphazard manner and does not satisfy project requirements
- 2 – Project somewhat satisfies project requirements but lack creativity, originality or depth
- 3 – Project fulfills requirements and shows some evidence of creativity, originality or depth
- 4 – Project fulfills requirements and shows significant creativity, originality or depth
- 5 – Project fulfills requirements and shows significant creativity, originality and depth

Second Book: Optional book choice.

You must choose one of the books from the list on the other side of this letter. These books come from the Lone Star Reading List, which is recommended by librarians.

Product for the optional choice

You should complete the following assignment for the optional book. You will create a postcard about the book to send to your English teacher during the summer. We suggest you use a 5 x 8 index card. You should illustrate one side of the postcard in a way that reflects the book. On the back side, you should choose one of the following questions and answer it using well-written sentences:

1. Pick a major character in the book and describe how he or she changed throughout the novel. Would you have made a different set of decisions than this character?
2. What is the major conflict in this novel? Compare and contrast this conflict to a conflict you have read or heard about in the news.

Postcards should be mailed to:

Johnston Middle School
10410 Manhattan Street
Houston, TX 77096

All postcards should be postmarked by August 6th.

(House J to Ms. Helfman, jhelfman@houstonisd.org); (House M to Ms. Aust, kaust@houstonisd.org); (House S to Ms. Mione, emione@houstonisd.org); (House G to Mrs. Thornburgh-Barron, sthornbu@houstonisd.org)

If you have any questions about the summer reading program, please do not hesitate to contact us via e-mail.

The 8th grade English teachers look forward to spending the 2016-17 school year with you. Happy reading and have a great summer!

Mrs. Helfman
House J

Mrs. Aust
House M

Ms. Mione
House S

Mrs. Thornburg-Barron
House G

Optional Reading List

Bucking the Sarge by Christopher Paul Curtis

The Sarge milked the system to build an empire of slum housing and group homes. Luther's just one of the many people trapped in the Sarge's Evil Empire—but he's about to bust out.

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman

Nobody Owens, known to his friends as Bod, is a normal boy. He would be completely normal if he didn't live in a sprawling graveyard, being raised and educated by ghosts, with a solitary guardian who belongs to neither the world of the living nor of the dead.

The Grimm Legacy by Polly Shulman

Elizabeth has just started working as a page at the New York Circulating Material Repository - a lending library of objects, contemporary and historical, common and obscure. And secret, too - for in the repository's basement lies the Grimm Collection, a room of magical items straight from the Grimm Brother's fairy tales. But the magic mirrors and seven-league boots and other items are starting to disappear. And before she knows it, she and her fellow pages - handsome Marc, perfect Anjali, and brooding Aaron - are suddenly caught up in an exciting, and dangerous, magical adventure.

Incarceron by Catherine Fisher

Incarceron is a prison so vast that it contains not only cells and corridors, but metal forests, dilapidated cities, and wilderness. It has been sealed for centuries, and only one man has ever escaped. Finn has always been a prisoner here. Although he has no memory of his childhood, he is sure he came from Outside. His link to the Outside, his chance to break free, is Claudia, the warden's daughter, herself determined to escape an arranged marriage. They are up against impossible odds, but one thing looms above all: Incarceron itself is alive . . .

The Monstrumologist by Richard Yancey

In the short time he has lived with the doctor, Will has grown accustomed to his late night callers and dangerous business. But when one visitor comes with the body of a young girl and the monster that was eating her, Will's world is about to change forever. The doctor has discovered a baby Anthropophagus-- a headless monster that feeds through a mouth in its chest--and it signals a growing number of Anthropophagi. Now, Will and the doctor must face the horror threatening to overtake and consume our world before it is too late.

Peak by Roland Smith

After fourteen-year-old Peak Marcello is arrested for scaling a New York City skyscraper, he's left with a choice: wither away in juvenile detention or fly to Kathmandu with his long-lost father. Peak quickly learns that his father's renewed interest in him has strings attached. As owner of Peak Expeditions, he wants his son to be the youngest person to reach the Everest summit.

Prophecy of the Sister by Michelle Zink

Twin sisters Lia and Alice Milthorpe have just become orphans. They have also become enemies. As they discover their roles in a prophecy that has turned generations of sisters against each other, they find themselves entangled in a mystery that involves a tattoo-like mark, their parents' deaths, a boy, a book, and a lifetime of secrets.

The Roar by Emma Clayton

Mika lives in future London, behind The Wall: Solid concrete topped with high-voltage razor wire and guarded by a battalion of Ghengis Borgs, it was built to keep out the animals, because animals carry the plague. Or so Mika's been told. But ever since Ellie vanished a year ago, Mika's suspected his world may be built on secrets--and lies. When a mysterious organization starts recruiting mutant kids to compete in violent virtual reality games, Mika takes the chance to search for his twin sister--and the truth.