Incoming Eighth Grade Students

Summer Reading Assignment

May 2016

Dear Eighth Grade Students and Parents,

Even though summer vacation means it is time to relax, I know you understand the importance of continuing to read EVERY DAY! Read a newspaper, magazines, a novel, a collection of short stories, a nonfiction book, or a book of poetry. JUST KEEP READING! Reading helps you become the best writer you can be.

This summer I am assigning all incoming 8th graders to read only one book: **The Book Thief, by Markus Zusak.**

**Please complete the following assignments and be prepared to turn them in on the first day of school:**

As you read, I would like you to write a **short** summary after every chapter. This will help you clarify each character’s involvement in the novel’s plot development. If possible, keep your summary paragraphs all together in a spiral notebook. Please be neat! Write in blue or black ink.

**AFTER** you have finished the novel, please complete a **two-page typed essay** responding to the following prompt:

“Discuss the **symbolism** (practice of representing things by symbols) of Death as the **omniscient** (all-seeing, all-knowing) **narrator** of the novel. What are Death’s feelings for each victim? Death states, *“I’m* *always finding humans at their best and worst. I see their ugly and their beauty, and I wonder how the* *same thing can be both.”* (p. 491) What is ugly and beautiful about Liesel, Rosa, Hans Hubermann, Max Vandenburg, Rudy Steiner, and Mrs. Hermann? Why is Death haunted by humans?

Before you begin writing your essay, put together an outline to help with organization. Remember to open your paper with a “hook,” and somewhere in the opening paragraph, include a thesis statement (what your paper is about). Trying to write this essay without taking this advice will probably leave you feeling overwhelmed. I also suggest you begin reading this novel **sooner** rather than later, so you are not rushed when writing your essay.

Please do not read the following books, as they are part of the eighth grade curriculum:

**To Kill a Mockingbird, Call of the Wild, The Pearl, My Brother Sam is Dead, The Diary of Anne Frank, Mississippi Trial, 1955.**

Have a fantastic summer, and get ready for a great eighth grade year!

Mrs. Cindy Hunt