

Dear Incoming 7th grade GT students and parents,

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing our Gifted and Talented student 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 2010-11 school year. This summer we are asking students to read two books; one is required and one should be chosen from a prepared list included in this letter.

Since much of the seventh grade year is spent working on writing personal narratives, the seventh grade English teachers have made the required read the nonfiction memoir *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Patillo Beals. This book recounts the author's experiences as one of the nine teenagers who integrated Arkansas's Little Rock High School in 1957.

We have placed an order for this book at the Border's in Meyerland Plaza. **The books will be held at the front register under the name Johnston Middle, so students should go to a cashier to purchase the book.** Please note that while there is an adult version of this memoir, we are suggesting that students read the abridged young adult version. Students should come to school prepared to discuss the book. Themes from this book will be incorporated into a beginning of the year writing assignment.

Students should also choose and read at least one book from the prepared list of science fiction and fantasy books below. (Border's at Meyerland Plaza should also have these):

The Search for Delicious by Natalie Babbitt
Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card
Inkheart by Cornelia Funke
The Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula Guinn
Out of the Silent Planet by C.S. Lewis
Airborn by Kenneth Oppel
Birth of the Firebringer by Meredith Ann Pierce
The Golden Compass by Philip Pullman
The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan
The Amulet of Samarkand by Jonathan Stroud
The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien
Dragon's Bait by Vivian Vande Velde

Students should complete the following assignment for the science fiction/fantasy book they choose from the list. Students will create a postcard about the book to send to their English teacher during the summer. We suggest students use a 5 x 8 index card. They should illustrate one side of the postcard in a way that reflects the book. On the back side they 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.
3. Could this book be rewritten as realistic fiction? Why or why not? Would you want it to be? Why or why not? Explain and Elaborate.

Postcards should be mailed to Johnston Middle School (10410 Manhattan Street, Houston, TX 77096) and be postmarked by August 2.

House S students should send their cards in care of Mr. Dostert
House M students should send their cards in care of Mr. Garner
House J students should send their cards in care of Mrs. Blessington

We recognize that many of our GT students are cross-housed, but teachers will ensure that the postcards make it to the proper teacher once school begins.

If you have any questions about the summer reading program, please don't hesitate to contact us via E-mail. We hope this experience will be a valuable and enjoyable one for your child.

Sincerely,

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