

ELA SUMMER WORK – ENTERING GRADE 6

June 2018

Dear Parents:

Research and teacher experience have proven that students who engage in educational activities over the summer return to school in September with a definite advantage.

We are aware not only from research but from past, personal experience that summer work in reading and writing is vital for each student. *Therefore, this year your child has been assigned two book critiques (please see the attached list and format).* One book will be required, and the other will be the student's choice from a given list of books. The required book will be needed in class in September, as we will be working on an activity based on it.

Your child's summer reading should not just consist of assigned books. The students should read, for their own enjoyment and advancement, at least fifteen minutes every day or more in the summer. A place to start the search for books is the website www.lexile.com; you can find your child's lexile range on the Terranova home reports you received in the first trimester. A good rule is to pick books that are in their lexile range or 50 points above to support and challenge their reading skills, books that match their interests, and books that contain content that is age appropriate so that they have an enriching reading experience.

We urge you to encourage your child to put down the electronics for a while and read each and every day over the summer. *Increased reading ability, higher cognitive skills, better writing skills, and abundant vocabulary come primarily from exposure to literature.* Also, this will prevent the book critique work from becoming overwhelming due to last-minute rushing, and it will increase the quality of your child's work. *Please make sure your child thoroughly reads the two books required for the summer work.* Skimming a book and/or looking up plot summaries on the internet are not reading a book; they are cheating and plagiarism. Both book critiques will be read by the ELA teacher and graded as tests.

All summer work is due on the first day back to school in September.

Please sign below and cut off and return the bottom portion only tomorrow.

Thank you and have a safe and enjoyable summer!

(List of Books and Book Critique Format attached.)

I have read the ELA Summer Work – Entering Grade 6 letter AND the attached list/format.

Student's Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Book Critique Format for Summer Work -- Entering Grade 6

Please read carefully:

"Children's fiction is the most important fiction of all."

~Neil Gaiman, in his Newbury Medal Acceptance Speech for *The Graveyard Book*, 2009

The following books are well-known works of children's literature with content and lexile scores appropriate for entering 6th graders. They will be easy to find either on Amazon or in the library.

Some of them are award winners.

REQUIRED BOOK: *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman

Also choose ONE of the following books:

Sunder by William H. Armstrong

Over Sea, Under Stone by Susan Cooper

Matilda Bone by Karen Cushman

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare

The purpose of a book critique is to explore new literature. This exploration includes analyzing the literary elements and recording your own reaction to and thoughts about the literature.

The critique will be neatly and legibly handwritten on looseleaf and stapled together with a cover. *Use proper paragraph and sentence structure; correct usage of grammar, spelling, structure, etc., will all be included in the points given for each section.* The cover may be printed on the computer.

Front Cover:

Title of Book (underlined)

Author

A relevant illustration, either drawn and colored neatly or from the computer

Proper School Heading at the bottom.

Section One:

1. Plot: ← heading of page

Summarize the important events of the novel, *including the ending, in several well-written paragraphs*. (Don't worry about spoilers. I have read the books.) This should be *no less than one page, and no more than two*. Vocabulary – choose *five* words you were uncertain about and write their definitions, using a dictionary. [Worth 50 points]

Section Two:

2. My Opinions and Reflections: ← heading of page

Include the answers to the following questions *in several well-written paragraphs in at least one page*:

- Did you enjoy the novel? If so, why? If not, why not? Be specific.
- How did the characters change or what did they learn over the course of the novel? Do you feel any connection to the characters? For example, did the characters experience any emotions or situations that you have experienced yourself (although perhaps in different circumstances)? Explain with details.
- What is the main message about life in the novel? (There can be more than one.) Do you have any new thoughts or ideas about this theme after reading? Explain.
- Feel free to add any other comments or reactions you had to the novel, such as favorite or surprising scenes. [Worth 50 points]