

May 2017

Dear Incoming 8th grade Pre AP students and parents,

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing our Pre AP students with a challenging and rewarding curriculum, the Huffman Middle School Language Arts department has created a summer reading program for our Pre AP 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 2017-2018 school year.

Reading experts note that most young readers suffer a backslide in reading skills during the summer. Research shows that a consistent amount of reading each day (30-45 minutes) will increase reading and comprehension skills and benefit young readers in every subject, including math. It will also keep their mind sharp.

Over the summer, students will be required to read two of the following novels (see below). Students will complete a project that will account for a significant portion of the first nine weeks' grade for one of the chosen novels. **The assignment is mandatory.**

These titles are available through the Houston Public library system, Barnes and Noble, and/or Amazon.com. You might also try Half-Price Books.

Booked by Kwame Alexander – *Like lightning/you strike/fast and free/legs zoom/down field/eyes fixed/on the checkered ball/on the goal/ten yards to go/can't nobody stop you/can't nobody cop you...*

In this follow-up to the Newbery-winning novel THE CROSSOVER, soccer, family, love, and friendship, take center stage as twelve-year-old Nick learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams. Helping him along are his best friend and sometimes teammate Coby, and The Mac, a rapping librarian who gives Nick inspiring books to read.

This electric and heartfelt novel-in-verse by poet Kwame Alexander bends and breaks as it captures all the thrills and setbacks, action and emotion of a World Cup match!

He Said, She Said by Kwame Alexander - Sparks will fly in this hip-hop-hot teen novel that mixes social protest and star-crossed romance, from Newbery Medal and Coretta Scott King Honor-winning author Kwame Alexander! *He Said, She Said* is perfect for fans of Walter Dean Myers and Rachel Vail alike. This paperback edition includes a Q&A with author Kwame Alexander.

He says: Omar "T-Diddy" Smalls has got it made—a full football ride to UMiami, hero-worship status at school, and pick of any girl at West Charleston High. She says: Football, shmootball. Here's what Claudia Clarke cares about: Harvard, the poor, the disenfranchised, the hungry, the staggering teen pregnancy rate, investigative journalism . . . the list goes on. She does not have a minute to waste on Mr. T-Diddy Smalls and his harem of bimbos.

He Said, She Said is a fun and fresh novel from Kwame Alexander that throws these two high school seniors together when they unexpectedly end up leading the biggest social protest this

side of the Mississippi—with a lot of help from Facebook and Twitter. The stakes are high, the romance is hot, and when these worlds collide, watch out!

The Impossible Knife of Memory by Laurie Halse Anderson - For the past five years, Hayley Kincaid and her father, Andy, have been on the road, never staying long in one place as he struggles to escape the demons that have tortured him since his return from Iraq. Now they are back in the town where he grew up so Hayley can attend school. Perhaps, for the first time, Hayley can have a normal life, put aside her own painful memories, even have a relationship with Finn, the hot guy who obviously likes her but is hiding secrets of his own. Will being back home help Andy's PTSD, or will his terrible memories drag him to the edge of hell, and drugs push him over?

Wintergirls by Laurie Halse Anderson - *"Dead girl walking", the boys say in the halls.
"Tell us your secret", the girls whisper, one toilet to another.
I am that girl.
I am the space between my thighs, daylight shining through.
I am the bones they want, wired on a porcelain frame.*

Lia and Cassie are best friends, wintergirls frozen in matchstick bodies, competitors in a deadly contest to see who can be the skinniest. But what comes after size zero and size double-zero? When Cassie succumbs to the demons within, Lia feels she is being haunted by her friend's restless spirit.

Laurie Halse Anderson explores Lia's descent into the powerful vortex of anorexia, and her painful path toward recovery.

Life Unaware by Cole Gibsen - *Regan Flay has been talking about you.* Regan Flay is on the cusp of achieving her control-freak mother's "plan" for high school success—cheerleading, student council, the Honor Society—until her life gets turned horribly, horribly upside down. Every horrible text. Every horrible email. Every lie, manipulation, and insult she's ever said have been printed out and taped to all the lockers in school. Now Regan has gone from popular princess to total pariah. The only person who even speaks to her is her *former* best friend's hot but socially miscreant brother, Nolan Letner. Nolan thinks he knows what Regan's going through, but what *nobody* knows is that Regan isn't really Little Miss Perfect. In fact, she's barely holding it together under her mom's pressure. But the consequences of Regan's fall from grace are only just beginning. Once the chain reaction starts, no one will remain untouched... Especially Regan Flay.

All the Bright Places by Jennifer Niven - **Soon to be a major motion picture starring Elle Fanning!**

Theodore Finch is fascinated by death, and he constantly thinks of ways he might kill himself. But each time, something good, no matter how small, stops him.

Violet Markey lives for the future, counting the days until graduation, when she can escape her Indiana town and her aching grief in the wake of her sister's recent death.

When Finch and Violet meet on the ledge of the bell tower at school, it's unclear who saves whom. And when they pair up on a project to discover the "natural wonders" of their state, both Finch and Violet make more important discoveries: It's only with Violet that Finch can be himself—a weird, funny, live-out-loud guy who's not such a freak after all. And it's only with Finch that Violet can forget to count away the days and start living them. But as Violet's world grows, Finch's begins to shrink.

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven - Everyone thinks they know Libby Strout, the girl once dubbed "America's Fattest Teen." But no one's taken the time to look past her weight to get to know who she really is. Following her mom's death, she's been picking up the pieces in the privacy of her home, dealing with her heartbroken father and her own grief. Now, Libby's ready: for high school, for new friends, for love, and for *every possibility life has to offer. In that moment, I know the part I want to play here at MVB High. I want to be the girl who can do anything.*

Everyone thinks they know Jack Masselin, too. Yes, he's got swagger, but he's also mastered the impossible art of giving people what they want, of fitting in. What no one knows is that Jack has a newly acquired secret: he can't recognize faces. Even his own brothers are strangers to him. He's the guy who can re-engineer and rebuild anything, but he can't understand what's going on with the inner workings of his brain. So he tells himself to play it cool: *Be charming. Be hilarious. Don't get too close to anyone.*

Until he meets Libby. When the two get tangled up in a cruel high school game—which lands them in group counseling and community service—Libby and Jack are both pissed, and then surprised. Because the more time they spend together, the less alone they feel. *Because sometimes when you meet someone, it changes the world, theirs and yours.*

We Were Liars by E. Lockhart - A beautiful and distinguished family.

A private island.

A brilliant, damaged girl; a passionate, political boy.

A group of four friends—the Liars—whose friendship turns destructive.

A revolution. An accident. A secret.

Lies upon lies.

True love.

The truth.

All the Rage by Courtney Summers - Named a "Best Book of 2015" by Bustle, Book Riot, Chicago Public Library, Quill and Quire, and the B&N Teen Blog!

The sheriff's son, Kellan Turner, is not the golden boy everyone thinks he is, and Romy Grey knows that for a fact. Because no one wants to believe a girl from the wrong side of town, the truth about him has cost her everything—friends, family, and her community. Branded a liar and bullied relentlessly by a group of kids she used to hang out with, Romy's only refuge is the diner where she works outside of town. No one knows her name or her past there; she can finally be anonymous. But when a girl with ties to both Romy and Kellan goes missing after a party, and news of him assaulting another girl in a town close by gets out, Romy must decide whether she

wants to fight or carry the burden of knowing more girls could get hurt if she doesn't speak up. Nobody believed her the first time-and they certainly won't now-but the cost of her silence might be more than she can bear.

The Cabin by Natasha Preston – There may only be one killer, but no one is innocent in this new young adult thriller from Natasha Preston, author of *The Cellar*, a *New York Times* Bestseller, and *Awake* **Mature Material**

*They think they're invincible.
They think they can do and say whatever they want.
They think there are no consequences.
They've left me no choice.
It's time for them to pay for their sins.*

A weekend partying at a remote cabin is just what Mackenzie needs. She can't wait to let loose with her friends. But a crazy night of fun leaves two of them dead-murdered.

With no signs of a forced entry or struggle, suspicion turns to the five survivors. Someone isn't telling the truth. And Mackenzie's first mistake? Assuming the killing is over...

Awake by Natasha Preston - *Of course, the dress was white. This is what I'm supposed to die in, I thought. Not many people knew what their last outfit would be. I pulled it over my head. It fit me perfectly. It had long, loose fitting sleeves, a modest neckline, and waves of material on the skirt. I hated it. There were no shoes, and I was afraid I'd have to run through the forest barefoot but there weren't a lot of options. Besides, I'd run barefoot over a bed of nails to get away. "Scarlett, are you ready?" he called. I looked in the mirror and took a deep breath. Time to fight for my life.*

Scarlett Garner doesn't remember anything before the age of four-until a car accident changes everything. She starts to remember pieces of a past that frighten her. A past her parents hid from her...and a secret that could get her killed.

The Fault in Our Stars by John Green - "I fell in love the way you fall asleep: slowly, then all at once."

Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten.

Insightful, bold, irreverent, and raw, *The Fault in Our Stars* is award-winning author John Green's most ambitious and heartbreaking work yet, brilliantly exploring the funny, thrilling, and tragic business of being alive and in love.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen - "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." So begins *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen's witty comedy of manners—one of the most popular novels of all time—that features splendidly civilized sparring between the proud Mr. Darcy and the prejudiced Elizabeth Bennet as they play out their spirited courtship in a series of eighteenth-century drawing-room intrigues. Renowned literary critic and historian George Saintsbury in 1894 declared it the "most perfect, the most characteristic, the most eminently quintessential of its author's works," and Eudora Welty in the twentieth century described it as "irresistible and as nearly flawless as any fiction could be."

Between by Jessica Warman - Elizabeth Valchar-pretty, popular, perfect- wakes up after spending her eighteenth birthday party on her family's yacht to investigate a thumping noise. What she finds will change everything she thought she knew about her life, her friends, and everything in between. As Liz begins to unravel the circumstances surrounding her birthday night, she will find that no one around her, least of all Liz herself, was perfect-or innocent.

Game Changers by Mike Lupica - Ben McBain is every football team's dream player. He's a jack-of-all-trades guy that can handle almost any position. When the game is on the line, Ben's number is the one being called for the final play. But Ben wants to be the starting quarterback and the one thing standing in his way is the coach's son.

Shawn O'Brien looks the part. He has been groomed by his father, a former professional quarterback. But despite his size and arm strength, Shawn is struggling.

Ben is torn between being a good teammate and going after his own dream. As Ben finds out, Shawn isn't the easiest person to help. And when Ben gets an unexpected opportunity, the entire game will change for the both of them.

Game Changers Play Makers by Mike Lupica - Still living large off their incredible football championship win just weeks before, Ben McBain and his crew must now prepare for basketball season. Ben is known as the best point guard throughout the league. And now that Shawn O'Brien has joined their team, they are a shoo-in to win it all. But there is a new kid in town, Chase Braggs, a point guard like Ben who seems to be better, stronger, and faster. Refusing to let his team down, Ben hits the courts hard to practice. Ben's rivalry with Chase seems to take the fun out of playing ball with his best friends. Will Ben be able to pull it together for his team and for himself?

Game Changers Heavy Hitters by Mike Lupica - Ben and his friends, the Core Four Plus One, are so excited to play in their town's All-Star Baseball league. But in the first game of the season Ben gets hit by a pitch. It's never happened to him before and it shakes him up.

Another player on Ben's team, Justin, is acting really weirdly. Ben's known Justin for a while and they're friendly but he's not one of Ben's closest "boys." Justin is the team's best hitter but his behavior on and off the field is erratic.

Ben discovers that Justin's parents are getting a divorce and Justin is thinking about quitting the team. Like good teammates do, Justin helps Ben deal with his issues at bat while Ben is there for his friend while his family is struggling.

If you prefer another book not included on the list, it must be approved. Please email me at mparker@huffmanisd.net for approval. Thank you!

Summer Assignment Details

You will complete a dialectical journal for each of the novels you choose. You are required to complete 10 journal entries (for each novel) that should explore your thoughts from the beginning to the end of the book. The dialectical journal instructions and examples can be found in this packet, as well as on my teacher website. A test grade will be taken on these journal entries. These must be completed before the end of the first week of school.

Within the first week of school, you will also complete a reading project for one of the novels you chose. This will be taken as a test grade as well for the first nine week grading period.

Dialectical(die-uh-LEKT-i-cul), n. : the art or practice of arriving at the truth through logical arguments

Journal (JUHR-nul), n. : a personal record of events, experiences, and reflections kept on a regular basis; a diary.

What is a Dialectical Journal?

A dialectical journal is another name for a double-entry journal or a reader-response journal. A dialectical journal is a journal that records a dialogue, or conversation between the ideas in the text (the words that you are reading) and the ideas of the reader (the person who is doing the reading). This is what you must do in your journal-keep a dialogue with yourself. In your journal, have a conversation with the text and yourself. Write down your thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas while you read. A dialectical journal can include all sorts of things: class notes, notes on discussions, notes on papers, reactions to readings. The important part is that you, the reader, are reading something and then responding to it with your feelings and ideas!

How Do I Keep A Dialectical Journal?

Your journal will use a two-entry form:

- In the LEFT COLUMN, write down parts of paragraphs from our books and articles, quotes, or notes from class that you think are interesting or important.
- In the RIGHT COLUMN, write down YOUR OWN thoughts, commentary, and questions about the information in the LEFT COLUMN.

Paragraphs and quotes
from the book

Page #

Your thoughts, comments and
questions related to the paragraphs and
quotes.

When I am Writing in my Dialectical Journal, is there a Right and Wrong Answer?

NO! A dialectical journal shows your own thoughts and ideas about the things you read. When you write your dialectical journals, you should be as original and creative as you can be. The sky's the limit!

Date: July 2013 **Total Pages:** 195

Quotes from Text

"Thanks. It's really nice." But the words sounded hollow, even to Brian.

Page

pg. 8

Notes from Me

Why does Brian feel that way about getting a hatchet from his Mom? If the words sounded hollow to Brian, he must not mean it. Why is he mad at his Mom?
(Asking questions)

"No roads, no trails, no clearings. Just the lakes, and it came to him that he would have to use a lake for landing. If he went down into the trees he was certain to die."

Pg.

I can't imagine keeping my cool in a situation like this. I'd be on my cell phone, panicking, and trying to land the plane! I guess it's important to keep your cool in a crisis. **(Connecting with the text)**

him. He could believe the hunger, had never felt this way. The lake water had filled his stomach, but burger, the emptiness roared at him. He could believe the hunger, had never felt this way. The lake water had filled his stomach, but left it hungry, and now it demanded food, screamed for food."

behavior. I've been hungry before, but never like that. Is he going to start eating things that are poison because he is so hungry?
(Observation of author craft and connections)

- 6 additional entries would continue on for a minimum of 10 entries **per novel**.
- Page numbers will indicate selections from the beginning, middle, and end of the book.

An Exemplary Double-Entry Journal Contains the Following:

- Total number of entries are 10 or more for the entire book. (20 total)
- Each "from text" entry is **two or more complete sentences**.
- "from text" entries are from the entire book (beginning, middle, and end). This is indicated by page numbers.
- Each "from text" entry contains no spelling errors.
- All "from me" entries have **three or more complete sentences and demonstrate fully developed thoughts or connections about the text**.

Excellent Reasons to Read

Read to Reduce Stress!

Since 8th graders find themselves on the cusp of so much change, the 8th-grade year can often be a time of tremendous stress. Reading has been shown to actually decrease stress! Our selection of books for 8th graders is designed with students emotional needs in mind as well as their academic needs.

Think of books as stress relievers. They give the mind a very specific place to go, and readers can immerse themselves in the flow of a fictional story or nonfictional narrative. When one is engaged in a fascinating book, all the concerns of school life that might plague a student's mind fall away and are replaced by the magic of storytelling.

Read to Expand Vocabulary!

By 8th grade, students have hopefully built up a very usable level of vocabulary. For 8th-grade level reading literature, special care is taken to ensure that students are continuing to elevate their vocabulary and increase their understanding of myriad words and concepts.

This has some effects that go well beyond students choosing a more elevated language for their writing. People who are more articulate and are often regarded as more intelligent. Studies have shown that people who use a wider variety of language are more likely to receive promotions during their careers than people who have a limited vocabulary.

Read to Increase Knowledge!

Vocabulary isn't the only database in which reading contributes. In 8th Grade, we like to give our students a selection of informational books. Becoming knowledgeable in a wide variety of fields increases a student's ability to make educated decisions as well as lending them the aptitude to engage in conversations on a variety of topics. Although having in-depth knowledge

is valuable in areas of concentrated learning, having a broad base general knowledge is useful in many aspects of a student's life.

Read to Stimulate the Mind!

Reading has been shown to stimulate the mind in ways that watching TV and playing video games simply does not. Furthermore, longer reading sessions with narrative structures and a cast of characters help strengthen one's mental capacity. We suggest a broad array of topics for 8th-grade reading because many students are still discovering what areas of interest fascinate them the most. You never know what might stimulate a child's mind most until they've read about it!

Read to Improve Memory!

Reading actively improves one's memory! Because fiction and nonfiction are both inherently complex things that involve multiple plot lines and details that must be kept in mind for quick recall, reading a book serves as an excellent gymnasium for strengthening the mind.

Like muscles, one's memory deteriorates without use. People who use memory and recall more frequently have a stronger capacity for recall in all aspects of their life. Some of the best ways to increase one's ability to remember important details include reading and discussing books.

Read to Develop Analytical Thinking!

Reading also develops analytical thinking. When one reads, one is passing the thoughts of another human being through one's mind. Although lower-level readers will tend to accept all the content that they are engaging as truth, more advanced readers will begin to notice a separation between one's own beliefs and the beliefs being presented in the work.

Using writing exercises to articulate the differences and perspectives, be they between the author and the reader or the author and another author, is an excellent way to flex and develop critical thinking skills.

Read to Increase Concentration and Focus!

In today's world, we find ourselves bombarded with information. Students have become especially adept at multitasking.

Although multitasking is an excellent ability to master, there are weaknesses to having a distractible mind. Reading helps practice the lost art of focus.

Engaging fiction or nonfiction involves putting aside all distractions and paying attention only to the words on the page for an extended period of time. Nowadays, students are used to following Twitter, updating their Facebook, listening to music, watching television, and browsing the internet all more or less simultaneously. Reading remains an activity that demands one's full attention.

In an environment where concentration is a rare ability, having the skill to be able to fully engage a single task is becoming increasingly invaluable.

Read to Become a Better Writer!

Reading also makes students better writer! When students read, they are passing through their minds well edited and carefully considered sentences. These are no longer words that would accurately describe the bulk of content that most people read on a daily basis! Facebook statuses, tweets, and popular online magazine articles tend to be far less thoughtful and meaningful.

In the same way that musicians listen to copious amounts of music and are able to cite artists who have influenced their work, so too are writers able to point to which works of fiction most influenced their writing style and their own voice. Although it's all well and good to practice writing on its own, analyzing the aspects of literature that make a particular piece of writing so

effective is an incredibly efficient way to improve one's writing ability. That's why we always encourage writing activities to be used in conjunction with reading assignments.

If you have any questions about the summer reading program, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail (mparker@huffmanisd.net).

I look forward to spending the 2016-17 school year with you. Happy reading and have a great summer!