

To the Parents and Guardians of Incoming DRMS 8th Graders:

We are so excited for the 2019-2020 school year! Eighth grade is a very exciting year for your child, with new topics to study in every class and high school to look forward to. Throughout the year, your child will be challenged to learn new things and grow in knowledge and experience. This year, more than in any other year of middle school, your child will prepare for high school and the challenges that come with it. As 8th grade teachers, we are excited to help your child become more confident and ready for freshman year!

In an effort to help our Desert Ridge students be more prepared and confident for the upcoming year, our Language Arts department requires summer reading. Research has shown that students who read over the summer are more successful academically, and students who don't read during the summer often show a decline in reading skills between May and August. Summer reading will help our students to be more prepared for the school year and will help them to be more successful in all classes.

During the summer, each incoming 8th grader will be required to read a novel from the following list of novels. After reading the novel, each student will complete a culminating project, which will be due at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. This project will be one of the first grades that students receive for 8th grade Language Arts.

8th Grade Reading List

The list of 8th grade novels is found on the back of this letter, along with a short description of each novel. Throughout the year, 8th graders will study literature and informational texts related to several historical time periods. In preparation for this focus of study, many of the summer reading selections are historical fiction and nonfiction. It is suggested that students conduct some independent research (either on the internet or in a book) to learn more about the context for the novel that they will read, however this research is not required. Novels may be purchased or checked out from the public library (**there are limited copies at the library, so find your novels early!**).

Culminating Assignment, due Friday, August 16:

Students will choose one of the following assignments to complete:

Write your own test - a combination of matching, multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay. You must include an answer key with page numbers where you can verify answers. 15 question minimum.	Summarize the book in poem form. Poem can be any format, but be purposeful with rhyme scheme, stanzas, etc. Minimum of 20 lines.	Design an illustrated timeline for events in the book. Must include at least 20 events. Must be decorated with fully-colored visuals from the book.	As a literary agent, write a letter to the publishing company designed to persuade them to publish this book. 1 1/2 page minimum, proper letter format.
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(If you are a student who is BRAND NEW to Desert Ridge this year, talk to your teacher about an adjusted timeline for the reading assignment and the culminating project. You can be given extra time if needed.)

If you have any questions regarding the summer reading program, you may direct your questions to drmslangarts@gmail.com. These emails will be checked and answered once a week during the summer.

Due to mature themes, it is recommended that you seek out parent reviews before helping your student select a book.

REGULAR & ACCELERATED: Choose ONE of the following novels to read during the summer:

***A Break with Charity: A Story about the Salem Witch Trials* by Ann Rinaldi** (320 pages): A group of girls incites a torrent of false accusations that will result in imprisonment and death for innocent people.

***Assassin* by Anna Myers** (192 pages): A young girl is persuaded to assist John Wilkes Booth in his plan to assassinate Lincoln.

***Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson** (312 pages): A Revolutionary War-era slave wages her own fight for freedom.

***Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two* by Joseph Bruchac** (231 pages): a fictional story about a young Navajo boy who serves in the U.S. military as a code talker, sending coded messages in his native language in an effort to save American lives.

***Courage Has No Color- The True Story of the Triple Nickles: America's First Black Paratroopers* by Tanya Lee Stone** (160 pages): the true story of the African-American paratroopers who fought in WWII.

***Eyes of the Emperor* by Graham Salisbury** (256 pages): the fictional story of a Japanese-American teen who joins the U.S. military just before the attack on Pearl Harbor. His story recounts the prejudice and hatred inflicted upon the Japanese-Americans as a result of fear.

***Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Houston** (240 pages): the true story of a young Japanese-American girl whose family is forced into an American internment camp, where she grows up separated from the rest of the world.

***Lyddie* by Katherine Paterson** (182 pages): A young girl is hired out to pay for her family's debts. She ventures to the textile mills of Lowell, MA, only to find out that her dreams of being reunited with her family may be impossible.

***Salt to the Sea* by Ruta Sepetys** (400 pages): Winter, 1945. Four teenagers. Four secrets. Each one born of a different homeland; each one hunted, and haunted, by tragedy, lies...and war.

***Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson** (224 pages): A high school freshman deals with the social consequences of calling the police to a party after an assault and finds herself in almost complete isolation.

***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini** (400 pages): A heartbreaking story about the friendship between the son of a wealthy Afghan merchant and a young servant endures through a tumultuous time in history- the fall of the Afghan Monarchy.

***The Serpent King* by Jeff Zentner** (384 pages): A male protagonist and his two friends who find themselves--and each other--while on the cusp of graduating from high school with hopes of leaving their small-town behind.

***When My Name Was Keoko* by Linda Sue Park** (208 pages): the fictional story of two Korean children who grow up in Japanese-occupied Korea, facing war and the loss of their own culture.

GIFTED: Choose ONE of the following novels (set in the 1920-30's) to read during the summer:

***All the Earth, Thrown to the Sky* by Joe R. Lansdale** (256 pages): When the devastation wrought by endless dust storms in 1930s Oklahoma makes orphans of Jack and his friends, they take the truck of a dead man and set out to find a new start.

***Hitch* by Jeanette Ingold** (288 pages): Moss is in desperate need of work, and so he decides to head out west as a member of Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps to help protect Montana's wildlife from devastating erosion and wildfires.

***Moon Over Manifest* by Clare Vanderpool** (368 pages): After a life of riding the rails with her father, Abilene is sent away to live with an old friend while her father works a railroad job. Arriving in Manifest, Kansas, she is disappointed to find that it's just a dried-up, worn-out old town; until she discovers a history full of colorful and shadowy characters—and long-held secrets.

***Stella by Starlight* by Sharon M. Draper** (320 pages): When a burning cross set by the Klan causes panic and fear in 1932 Bumblebee, North Carolina, Stella, a young African-American girl, must face prejudice and find the strength to demand change in her segregated town.

***The Best Bad Luck I Ever Had* by Kristin Levine** (272 pages): In a time of racial segregation and hatred pervasive in Alabama, Dit meets Emma, who is black, and their friendship challenges accepted ways of thinking and leads them to save the life of a condemned man.

***The Gallery* by Laura Marx Fitzgerald** (321 pages): It's 1929, and twelve-year-old Martha has no choice but to work as a maid in the New York City mansion of a wealthy family. Despite Gatsby-like parties and trimmings of success, she suspects something is deeply wrong in the household- in a house filled with secrets, nothing is quite what it seems, and no one is who they say.

***The Lost Girl of Astor Street* by Stephanie Morrill** (347 pages): Lydia has vanished. Convinced the police are looking in all the wrong places, eighteen-year-old Piper begins her own investigation to solve the mystery of her best friend's disappearance. With the reluctant help of a young detective, Piper goes searching for answers in the dark, corrupt underbelly of 1924 Chicago.

***The Truth About Sparrows* by Marian Hale** (260 pages): Sadie doesn't want a new life. But hard times in drought-plagued Missouri send her family to Texas. Sadie hates this strange new place, where children work at the cannery to help make ends meet and people are rude to her disabled father. Yet when trouble comes, these new neighbors help the family make it

through.