

8th Grade Summer Reading List 2011

Below is a list of readings and assignments for the summer months. These highly-recommended readings and assignments will engage students in age-appropriate texts in order to reinforce comprehension and vocabulary skills.

Each assignment will be counted as a test grade for the First Trimester in September, 2010. In addition to these assignments, students will also be tested on their reading comprehension of these books when they return to school. Tests comprise 40% of the Literature grade.

Assignment 1 – Letter to the Author

1. Read *Have a Little Faith* by Mitch Albom.
2. Write a letter to the author (200 words or more) telling him/her how much you did/did not enjoy the book and *why*.
 - Use the attached format for a personal letter.
 - Pay very close attention to your writing.
 - Reference details in the book to support your points.
 - Organize your letter so that it is easy to read (*for example: each paragraph should have a topic sentence and should talk about one main idea, etc.*)

Assignment 2 – Social Studies Coursework

1. Read the following two books: *The Drummer Boy of Vicksburg*, by G. Clifton Wisler, and *The Who Comes with Cannons*, by Patricia Beatly. These two books are required reading and must be completed by the first day of school.
2. There will be a Social Studies test on these two books when you return (20% of First Marking Period grade)

Have a great summer,

...and don't forget about books when you are bored!

– The Middle School Teachers



Styles for Business and Friendly Letters

Business Letters

From a letter requesting information about a product to a letter asking for charitable donations, business letters are a common form of formal writing, writing intended for readers with whom the writer is not personally acquainted. Whatever the subject, an effective business letter

- includes six parts: the heading, the inside address, the salutation or greeting, the body, the closing, and the signature.
- follows one of several acceptable forms: In *block format*, each part of the letter begins at the left margin; in *modified block format*, the heading, the closing, and the signature are indented to the center of the page.
- uses formal language to communicate respectfully, regardless of the letter's content.

The heading indicates the address and business affiliation of the writer. It also includes the date the letter was sent.

Model Business Letter

In this letter, Yolanda Dodson uses modified block format to request information.

The **inside address** indicates where the letter will be sent.

A **salutation** is punctuated by a colon. When the specific addressee is not known, use a general greeting such as "To whom it may concern."

The **body** of the letter states the writer's purpose. In this case, the writer is requesting information.

The **closing** "Sincerely" is common, but "Yours truly" and "Respectfully yours" are also acceptable. To end the letter, the writer types her name and provides a **signature**.

Students for a Cleaner Planet
c/o Memorial High School
333 Veterans' Drive
Denver, Colorado 80211

January 25, 20 --

Steven Wilson, Director
Resource Recovery Really Works
300 Oak Street
Denver, Colorado 80216

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Memorial High School would like to start a branch of your successful recycling program. We share your commitment to reclaiming as much reusable material as we can. Because your program has been successful in other neighborhoods, we're sure that it can work in our community. Our school includes grades 9-12 and has about 800 students.

Would you send us some information about your community recycling program? For example, we need to know what materials can be recycled and how we can implement the program.

At least fifty students have already expressed an interest in getting involved, so I know we'll have the people power to make the program work. Please help us get started.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Yolanda Dodson
Yolanda Dodson