

MacArthur Middle School

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Dr. Camron Nystrom

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

As an old school year comes to a close and a new one begins in about two and a half months, we wanted to take this opportunity to share with you the 8th grade summer reading list. In order to facilitate a smoother transition from summer to school, we are asking that all incoming 8th grade students read one or two books from the list below during the summer. If a student is in **Regular English**, he/she will choose **ONE** novel from the list. If a student is in **Accelerated English**, he/she will choose **TWO** novels from the list. *Note: The two books for Accelerated English should come from two different series.* Of course, students are welcome to read more of the books on the list, and we encourage students to read more frequently during the summer in a variety of mediums either in print or electronic (magazines, newspapers, fiction, nonfiction, etc.). Summer reading encourages students to continue practicing their reading skills during the summer so they will be all the more prepared for the new school year. As with sports, music, and any other interest or hobby, the best way to develop a skill is to practice it frequently. Summer reading is one way that students can practice reading without the in-school stress of a time crunch or teacher-directed reading.

When choosing books for this summer reading program, 8th grade highlights Science Fiction, a genre that has gained popularity with the introduction of dystopian novels and series such as *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*. A popular education website, readwritethink.org, describes Science Fiction as “a genre of fiction in which the stories often tell about science and technology of the future. It is important to note that Science Fiction has a relationship with the principles of science—these stories involve partially true- partially fictitious laws or theories of science. It should not be completely unbelievable because it then ventures into the genre fantasy. The plot creates situations different from those of both the present day and the known past. Science Fiction texts also include a human element, explaining what effect new discoveries, happenings and scientific developments will have on us in the future.”

In addition to **selecting and reading ONE (Regular) or TWO (Accelerated) of the novels below**, students will also complete **ONE** short written response to the book. The prompts for the written response are also included in this letter. Please note that the prompts are labeled for either Regular English or Accelerated English. These written responses will be due August 26th and will be submitted into Schoology once students have been assigned their English teacher.

Please choose from the following (list continues on the next page):

Remember: Regular chooses one book
Accelerated chooses two books (one book from each of two different series)

The Ender Quartet Series by Orson Scott Card: Once again, the Earth is under attack. Alien “buggers” are poised for a final assault. The survival of the human species depends on a military genius: Ender Wiggins. Brilliant. Ruthless. Cunning. A tactical and strategic master. And a child. Can Ender lead Earth in a victory against an alien population that has once already tried to wipe out humanity?

Book 1: *Ender's Game*

Book 2: *Speaker for the Dead*

Book 3: *Xenocide*

Book 4: *Children of the Mind*

The House of the Scorpion Series by Nancy Farmer: Matteo Alacrán was not born; he was harvested. His DNA came from El Patrón, lord of a country called Opium, which was once called Mexico. Escape is the only chance Matt has to survive. But escape is no guarantee of freedom because Matt is marked by his difference in ways he doesn't even suspect.

Book 1: *The House of the Scorpion*

Book 2: *The Lord of Opium*

Life As We Knew It Series by Susan Beth Pfeffer: An asteroid has just knocked the moon closer to Earth. The result is catastrophic. How can humans survive in a future where worldwide tsunamis are wiping out coasts, earthquakes are rocking the continents, and volcanic ash is blocking out the sun?

Book 1: *Life As We Knew It*

Book 2: *The Dead and the Gone*

Book 3: *This World We Live In*

Book 4: *The Shade of the Moon*

*Note: Book 1 and Book 2 are interchangeable. You can read either one because it's the same event but told from 2 different perspectives. However, both Book 1 and Book 2 must be read before Book 3 in order for Book 3 to make sense. Book 4 must be read last.

This Side of Paradise Series by Steven Layne: When his father relocates the family to a town called Paradise to work for the mysterious Eden Corporation, Jack Barrett uncovers a sinister plot that threatens everyone he loves.

Book 1: *This Side of Paradise*

Book 2: *Paradise Lost*

Uglies Series by Scott Westerfeld: Tally is about to turn sixteen and undergo the traditional operation to make her pretty. Just before her operation, Tally meets Shay, a fellow "ugly" who is not convinced being ugly is that bad. Shay joins a rebel group resisting the authorities. Tally is suspected of assisting Shay and will not receive her "pretty" operation until she betrays her friend.

Book 1: *Uglies*

Book 2: *Pretties*

Book 3: *Specials*

Book 4: *Extras*

Again, of the 16 novels listed here, we are asking Regular English students to read **one** and Accelerated English students to read **two**. We have chosen novels that are part of a series to offer more options as well as further reading if students enjoy the first book in the series.

There are many different ways to access these novels. Barnes & Noble will have these titles available both in-store and online. Amazon is another reliable source for buying new or gently used books. We have also contacted Arlington Heights, Indian Trails, and Prospect Heights Libraries to inform them of our program. While you can check out actual novels from these libraries, you may also check out eBooks, which can be loaded onto tablets or phones.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Joe Behun (jbehun@d23.org) or Melissa Joffe (mjoffe@d23org). We look forward to a successful 8th grade year for both you and your child(ren).

Sincerely,

Joe Behun, Melissa Joffe, and Megan Windsor
8th Grade English Teachers
MacArthur Middle School