



May 26, 2020

Dear Families of Soon-To-Be Sixth Graders:

On Tuesday May 26th, I joined the rising 6th grade's Google Meet to spend a few friendly moments providing a very brief overview of 6th grade, and to specifically reveal their summer reading assignment. During our time together, I discussed the generalities of this letter with them. Please review the following:

1. **All students must read *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio (2012) for the first day of school.** Students will be responsible for obtaining their own copy of the novel. Please reach out if this becomes problematic! *Wonder* will be the source of our initial 6th grade language arts studies, so I encourage students to read *Wonder* as near the beginning of school as possible. This is a poignant piece of contemporary fiction about a main character, roughly the same age as your rising 6th grade student, who struggles to find acceptance by his peers during his first time in a school. Related activities for this unit will include important discussion, real-world applications, writing activities, a reading comprehension test, and class initiatives central to the start of the middle school experience. The unit will culminate with a class viewing of the feature film.
2. **All students should also read a grade-level novel of their choice, at least 150 pages, for the first day of school.** I am happy to provide suggestions! My philosophy about summer reading aligns with the wisdom of Johnson and Giorgis in *The Wonder of it All: When Literature and Literacy Intersect*, "[Giving students] time to read books of their own choosing, for their own purposes, and without having to prove that comprehension has occurred remains significant in the ongoing development of readers." This eliminates stress, increases enjoyment, promotes organic comprehension, and fosters an ongoing love for reading.

**\*A creative writing assignment will accompany the book of choice and, barring changes to how our school year begins, will be due the Wednesday following the start of school (one week after the first day). Students may handwrite or type and print the assignment. This assignment is detailed on the next page.\***

3. **Students who read additional grade-level novels, beyond the two assigned, will receive one literature bonus point per novel, up to a max of three bonus points.** Parent signatures on the attached form will verify these additional books. Students should bring this form with them on the first day of school. Students may need more of a mental break than usual this summer, so there is no pressure to start reading anything right away, or to read any additional books; the bonus points are just a small reward for those who feel inclined!

I am so excited to teach this class, and I cannot wait for the adventure that awaits us in August. It will be epic!

In Christ,

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Attachments:  
*Summer Reading Book of Choice Writing Assignment*



Bonus Book Tracker

### Summer Reading Book of Choice Writing Assignment

The book of choice should be something the student really enjoys! It should be not too easy, not too challenging, not something that he or she has already read a bunch of times, and something he or she would be excited to tell me about! This writing assignment, creative in nature, primarily provides me with a baseline for the student's ability to integrate the *Six Traits of Writing* (*ideas, organization, word choice, voice, fluency, and conventions*) to which our middle school writing curriculum closely adheres. Students will receive completion credit to jumpstart their grade book. **Please respond to one of the following creative writing prompts.**

- 1. Imagine you get to transport yourself into the story as a character - not one of the characters already present, but an additional character currently missing - and describe your purpose.** Consider these questions: What is your background? What role will you play? What will be your relationship to the main characters? Will you be a good person or a not-so-good person, a hero or a villain? How so? How will you impact the story? How do you change the current outcome? What ultimately happens to you?
- 2. You are responsible for planning the ultimate surprise birthday party for the main character in your novel; describe the party!** Consider these questions: Who is your main character? Who is going to help you plan the party? What will be the party theme? Where will the party be? What kind of decorations will you have? Who will you invite? What will people wear? What kind of food and drinks will you have? What fun activities will the party include? How long will it last?
- 3. Write a letter to the author and tell him or her how you feel about the book.** Consider these questions: What is your overall reaction to the book? Be honest! What do you think was the author's purpose for writing the book? What did you learn from it? Could you relate to the book somehow? Was the book well-written? Did it make you laugh, cry, or think about something in a new way? What do you think about things like the setting and characters? Do you wish it ended differently? If there's not already a sequel, should he or she write one; why or why not? What should the sequel be about?

#### General Guidance:

- All writing pieces should be the students' best efforts to use learned composition, spelling, punctuation, general grammar, and literary skills and concepts.
- All writing pieces should be two-three paragraphs of four-six sentences each, which will compel and allow for a reasonable demonstration and evaluation of critical thinking, creativity, and all composition elements. Students wishing to write more are encouraged to do so.
- Students should think about each question with each writing prompt, but that does not mean they need to answer each one directly, or in any particular order. They are designed to compel holistic thoughts.
- All writing pieces must be legible if handwritten, or typed in a legible, traditional font (Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, etc). Please, no tiny lettering, cursive/italicized fonts, or bright colors!



**SUMMER READING BONUS NOVEL TRACKER**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Novel Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approx. Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Novel Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approx. Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Novel Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approx. Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Signature**