

June 2014

Dear Incoming Eighth Grade Students and Families:

The Macopin Middle School Language Arts teachers and I are eager to present the Summer Reading Lists to the eighth grade students for the 2014-2015 school year. As you begin to enjoy your summer, please continue to make reading an important part of your family's activities. While reading strategies will be emphasized by your child's teacher throughout the school year, middle school children need to continue to read during the summer, not only for enjoyment, but also to sustain and strengthen skills they have already developed.

Eighth grade students slated for **Honors English-Language Arts** will be asked to read a total of 2 books. The first is a required text, *Life As We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer; the second is a book of his or her choice from the suggested list of titles. However, students are obviously encouraged to read beyond these requirements. Please be mindful of helping your child choose a book that is commensurate with his or her reading ability. Also, please consult teachers, local librarians, and book websites as you aid your child in choosing the book they will read to gain information about reading levels and other information about various titles.

In order to complete the Summer Reading requirement, students should choose one of the 8 provided topics and write a cohesive essay using specific examples from *Life As We Knew It*. For the second (choice) book, students should also complete the comprehensive graphic organizer using specific examples from his or her chosen text from the suggested list. Both of these assignments will be due on **Monday, September 15, 2014**. The **essay** will count as a **quiz grade** for the first marking period and the **graphic organizer** will count as a **weighted homework grade** for the first marking period. No assignments will be accepted after this date.

For your convenience, the Summer Reading Lists and graphic organizer are posted on the West Milford Schools' website and they have been sent to the West Milford Public Library. All of these titles are also available for purchase, either new or used, from amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com. If your child owns a Nook, Kindle, or iPad, please consider downloading any of these titles to his or her device. Some of these titles may also be available as digital downloads from the West Milford Public Library. You can search their digital database at www.wmtl.org and click on "ebooks." Additionally, the West Milford Library has an "app" that can be downloaded to a Smartphone or iPad so you can quickly search the library's catalog.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Sharon West at 973-697-1701 x7057 or via e-mail at sharon.west@wmtps.org.

Have a wonderful, word-filled summer!

Sharon A. West, MA, MAEd.
K-12 Supervisor of English-Language Arts

Incoming 8th Grade Summer Reading

Required Text for Honors: *Life As We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer

The Wave by Todd Strasser

Ironman by Chris Crutcher

Sunrise Over Fallujah by Walter Dean Myers

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

Milkweed by Jerry Spinelli

Zel by Donna Jo Napoli

Slam! By Walter Dean Myers

Uglies by Scott Westerfield

A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness

The Eyeball Collector by F.E. Higgins

Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Ann Brashares

Cheshire Cheese Cat by Carmen Agra Deedy and Randall Wright

Revolver by Marcus Sedgwick

Heat by Mike Lupica

Amy and Roger's Epic Detour by Morgan Matson

Mob Princess: Count Your Blessings by Todd Strasser

The One-O'Clock Chop by Ralph Fletcher

Hate List by Jennifer Brown

Staying Fat for Sarah Burnes by Chris Crutcher

Running Loose by Chris Crutcher

The City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau

No Time to Cry by Lurlene McDaniel

If I Should Die Before I Wake by Han Nolan

The Boys From St. Petri by Bjarne Reuter

Wrestling Sturbridge by Rich Wallace

When Zachary Beaver Came to Town by Kimberly Willis

Found by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Striking Out by Will Weaver

Hard Ball by Will Weaver

Now Is Your Time! The African-American Struggle for Freedom (NF) by Walter Dean Myers

The Yankee Years (NF) by Joe Torre and Tom Verducci

The Berlin Wall (NF) by Doris Epler

Macopin Middle School
Summer Reading Assignment Sheet/Essay Topics
Grade 8 Honors

Choose one of the eight provided topics and write a cohesive essay using specific examples from the required text, *Life As We Knew It*. This assignment will be due on **September 15, 2015** and will count as a quiz grade for the first marking period. No assignments will be accepted after this date.

1. **[Gender Issues]** Consider the gender of the characters in your novel. How are male and female characters portrayed? How does the work portray their roles in society? How does gender influence the choices that are available to the characters and the decisions that they make? Write a paper that explores how gender affects the plot and character development in the novel.

Alternate Topics: Discuss how the novel would be different if the genders of the main characters were reversed. OR, discuss how the novel would change if the events were to take place today — Compare the influence of gender on the choices and decisions that the characters make in the world of the novel to the influence that gender would have if these characters were here today.

2. **[Positive/Negative Characters]** In the novel that you've read, some of the characters are given positive, sympathetic portrayals. Others have negative, perhaps even villainous portrayals. Still others may begin with negative qualities and gradually become more and more positive. Rarely does an author rely on the reader's personal sense of morality to determine which characters are positive and which are negative. Instead, there are details, actions, and characteristics that help define who is "good" and who is "bad." It's easy to know the difference in old westerns — good guys wear white hats; bad guys wear black hats. But even then, there are other details that help you know what is going on, details that even help you construct hierarchies (e.g., slightly bad to fully evil).

Think about your novel. How does the author indicate which characters are positive and which are negative? In your essay, explain how you can tell the difference.

3. **[Dreams & Reality]** Take a look at the characters in the novel that you've read. Each of the main characters in the novel is introduced to you with certain dreams, plans, and expectations. In the course of the novel, these main characters must come to terms with the difference between their dreams and the reality of the world around them.

Write a paper on your novel that examines how the main characters navigate the journey from dreams to reality — What kind of course do they follow, and how are they changed for their journey?

4. **[Realism and the Setting]** Do a close examination of the setting in your novel. What are the primary locations? How are these places made realistic — how does the author use extended description, background information, and specific detail to make the setting come alive for readers? How do the main characters fit in the settings — do they seem at home? Out of place? How do their reactions and interactions with the setting affect the realism of the locations?

In your paper, discuss the way that the techniques that the novelist uses to make the setting vivid and real to readers, and the extent to which these techniques are effective.

5. **[Shaped by Period]** Writers can't help but be influenced by the events and people that they see around them. The question is to what extent does that influence become part of the works that they write and how do they communicate their feelings and beliefs about the world around them.

For your essay, think about how the characters, setting, and themes in your novel relate to the period in which it was written. How is the novel an analysis of the period? How is it a reflection, and how is it a criticism? And how does the writer make opinions about that world clear to the reader?

6. **[Setting & Characters]** Consider the relationship between the characters and the setting for your novel. Think about the way that the characters are described, their characteristics, the conflicts that they face, the actions they take, and their emotional reactions. Compare these qualities to the setting — to the way that it is described, to the particular things that are described, and to the words that are used to describe the place(s) where the novel takes place.

In your paper, explain how the setting of the novel is representative (or not) of the characters.

7. **[Title]** How does the title of the novel that you've read relate to the novel itself? Is the title descriptive? Somewhat of a moral for the novel? A statement of the theme? Something else altogether? Why has the writer chosen this title over other possibilities?

In your paper, analyze the relationship between title and novel, paying attention to the reasons that the title highlights something that the author wants readers to know or come to understand about the novel.

8. **[Class Issues]** Think about the role that social class plays in the novel that you've read. What social classes are represented in the novel? To what extent is each class depicted? Are all the classes given equal representation? How do the classes shown in the novel relate to the classes that realistically existed in the time and place where the novel takes place? As you go through your novel, consider two important questions: how does the author feel about the different social classes, and how can you tell the author's opinion?

Write a paper that explores the way that social class and class issues affect the characters and plot of your novel.

SUMMER READING ESSAY RUBRIC

	Needs Work	Fair	Good	Excellent
Reflective Thought and Argument	Student uses writing to think about the reading but could reflect more about what has been read.	The essay shows that the student has thought about the novel and has interpreted it according to the prompt provided. Evidence from the novel may need to be further developed in order to prove the student's argument.	The essay shows that the student has thought about the novel and has interpreted it according to the prompt provided. Evidence from the novel is presented in order to prove the student's argument.	The essay shows that the student has thought about the novel and has taken risks in interpreting it in his/her argument. Evidence for the student's argument from the novel, connections between text and personal experience, prior knowledge, etc. are meaningful and well developed.
Comprehension and Analysis of Novel	The student may not have read carefully enough to remember many details about the novel or may not have included sufficient details in his/her essay.	The student includes information from the novel but may have unclear explanations of it or may need to further develop his/her ideas beyond summarizing and/or explaining a general opinion.	A good amount of detail from the novel shows the student has clearly understood the text and explained interpretations of the novel.	An exceptional amount of detail from the novel shows that the student has clearly understood the text and developed mature and unique interpretations. He/she writes about thoughts beyond a basic understanding of the events of the novel.
Essay Structure and Writing Prompt	Essay is disorganized and/or is missing several of the components from the writing prompt.	Essay is relatively organized but is missing one or two of the components from the writing prompt or needs clearer support.	Essay is organized in a five paragraph essay structure. The essay prompt questions are answered clearly.	Essay is precisely organized in a five paragraph essay structure. The essay prompt questions are answered clearly, logically, and in an interesting manner.
Writing Style	The essay has a number of errors some of which take away from the writing by affecting its clarity.	The essay has some errors but none serious enough to take away from the writing's clarity.	The essay has few errors and mature sentences.	The essay has very few if any errors. It is written in a mature, authoritative, interesting, and clear manner. A sense of voice or style is present.



**Macopin Summer Reading
Graphic Organizer for Choice Book
Grade 8 Honors**

A. Prediction

1. Read the first few chapters in your book. Then write a brief summary of what you have read so far.

Your summary must:

- Describe at least three key events in the reading using transition words.
- Be at least 4 sentences.

2. Make a prediction about what will happen next.

Your prediction must:

- Be linked to the events described in your summary.
- Be at least 4 sentences.

C. Thoughts I had While Reading

Complete each of the statements below:

When I read chapter ____ I felt...

I can relate to...

I am confused about...

I want to know why...

This reminds me of...

I want to ask the author/character...

B. Favorite Quotes

1. Identify three memorable phrases or sentences in your book. Use quotation marks.

Quote 1-

Quote 2-

Quote 3-

2. Then, tell why one of the above quotes stands out to you as being an important moment in the book.

D. Conflict

1. Describe a major conflict in the book you are reading.

2. If you were this character, how would you respond to this conflict?

Title _____ Author _____

Directions: Complete all four parts of this graphic organizer according to the prompts in this template. If you need more space to write, you may recreate this chart on your own or make additional copies before you begin.

<p style="text-align: center;">E. Prediction</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">F. Favorite Quotes</p> <p>Quote 1-</p> <p>Quote 2-</p> <p>Quote 3-</p> <p>2.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">G. Thoughts I had While Reading</p> <p>When I read chapter ____ I felt...</p> <p>I can relate to...</p> <p>I am confused about...</p> <p>I want to know why...</p> <p>This reminds me of...</p> <p>I want to ask the author/character...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">H. Conflict</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>

Summer Reading Graphic Organizer Rubric

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Fair Job	Needs Work
Prediction	<p>All areas of the section completed exceed the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>Written work in each section links to and extends aspects of the text.</p> <p>Word choice is vivid and effective.</p>	<p>All areas of the section completed meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>References are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice is considered.</p>	<p>All areas of the section completed may not meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>Limited or unsuccessful references are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice is simple.</p>	<p>Areas of the organizer are incomplete and do not meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>No successful references are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice not considered.</p>
Favorite Quote	<p>All areas of the section completed exceed the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>Written work in each section links to and extends aspects of the text.</p> <p>Word choice is vivid and effective.</p>	<p>All areas of the section completed meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>References are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice is considered.</p>	<p>All areas of the section completed may not meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>Limited or unsuccessful references are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice is simple.</p>	<p>Areas of the organizer are incomplete and do not meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>No successful references are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice not considered.</p>
Thoughts I Had While Reading	<p>All areas of the section completed exceed the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>Written work in each section links to and extends aspects of the text.</p> <p>Word choice is vivid and effective.</p>	<p>All areas of the section completed meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>References are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice is considered.</p>	<p>All areas of the section completed may not meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>Limited or unsuccessful references are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice is simple.</p>	<p>Areas of the organizer are incomplete and do not meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>No successful references are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice not considered.</p>
Conflict	<p>All areas of the section completed exceed the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>Written work in each section links to and extends aspects of the text.</p> <p>Word choice is vivid and effective.</p>	<p>All areas of the section completed meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>References are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice is considered.</p>	<p>All areas of the section completed may not meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>Limited or unsuccessful references are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice is simple.</p>	<p>Areas of the organizer are incomplete and do not meet the minimum requirements and expectations.</p> <p>No successful references are made to the text.</p> <p>Word choice not considered.</p>