

Middle School Summer Reading and Writing Assignment (Grades 6–8)

Dear Parents and Students,

As we prepare for the upcoming school year, students will complete a summer reading and writing assignment designed to build background knowledge and prepare them for our first unit of study.

This assignment will help students:

- Think deeply about important themes
- Practice writing skills
- Begin the year with a piece of writing ready to revise and improve in class

Summer Reading (Articles and Poems)

Students will read a set of short articles and poems focused on a common theme:

How labels and assumptions affect the way people treat one another

These texts are intended to introduce key ideas and provide background knowledge that will support our first novel study.

Text Sets

[6th Grade](#)

[7th Grade](#)

[8th Grade](#)

First Novel by Grade Level

- **6th Grade:** The Crossover by Kwame Alexander
- **7th Grade:** The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
- **8th Grade:** To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

All students should have their novel by **August 4th**.

Writing Assignment

After reading the provided texts, students will write an argumentative essay based on their grade-level prompt:

6th Grade:

How do labels affect how you see yourself and others?

7th Grade:

How do labels and stereotypes affect how people treat each other?

8th Grade:

How can labels and prejudice lead to unfair treatment?

Essay Requirements

The essay will be graded as a **50-point quiz grade**.

Students must include:

- An introduction (5points)
- A clear claim (thesis) (5points)
- Three body paragraphs (15 points)
 - Each body paragraph must include evidence from the assigned texts
 - Each piece of evidence must be explained
- Justification (15 points)
- Organization (5 points)
- Mechanics and formatting (5 points)

Formatting Expectations

- MLA format
- Typed
- Proper heading and spacing
- Works Cited page listing the texts used

Important Notes

- This essay is a rough draft and will not be graded as strictly as a final paper
- Students should be prepared to revise and improve this essay in class
- Writing should reflect the student's own thinking and understanding

Purpose of This Assignment

This assignment is designed to:

- Prepare students for the themes in their first novel
- Provide background knowledge for deeper discussions
- Allow us to begin the year with writing that can be revised and strengthened

Due Date

Students should bring their completed essay on the first day of school or they can email it to me at any time at blaireg@mytha.net.

Optional: Students may choose to read one of the suggested books to further explore themes of identity, labels, and fairness. These are not required but may help deepen understanding.

(Not required, but helpful for building background for our first unit)

6th Grade

Supports *The Crossover*

Focus: identity, decisions, thinking for yourself

- **Ghost** by Jason Reynolds
- **Booked** by Kwame Alexander

These selections support thinking about:

- making decisions
- handling pressure
- understanding identity

7th Grade

Supports *The Outsiders*

Focus: labels, stereotypes, group identity

- **Freak the Mighty** by Rodman Philbrick
- **The Wednesday Wars** by Gary D. Schmidt

These selections support thinking about:

- stereotypes
- belonging
- how people treat one another

8th Grade

Supports To Kill a Mockingbird

Focus: fairness, perspective, judgment

- **Tangerine** by Edward Bloor
- **The Giver** by Lois Lowry

These selections support thinking about:

- fairness
- truth versus appearance
- questioning systems

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Thank you for your support,

Blaire Goodson

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