

DELTA 8TH GRADE SUMMER READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT

June 2010

Dear Delta 8th Grader,

As part of your eighth grade Humanities Program, you will be required to read at least forty books between July 2010 and June 2011. You will begin working toward completion of this requirement by reading at least FOUR books this summer. THREE of the four books must be chosen from the list below. **THE OTHER BOOK MAY BE YOUR OWN SELECTION.**

Keep track of the required minimum FOUR books, and any additional books, you read over the summer in the following format:

Title	Author	Total Pages	Genre	Date Completed
The Pigman	Paul Zindel	149	YA Fiction	7/4/10

You may either record your FOUR books here, or you can create your own separate Book Log. Be prepared to transfer/modify your record in the fall to whatever format your specific humanities teacher requires for your class. In addition, you must complete the written assignment below for ONE of the THREE books you chose from the list. This assignment is **DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER.**

Enjoy the summer!

Sincerely,

Ms. Burnett, Ms. Merkel, Mr. Toft and Ms. Trout

DELTA 8TH GRADE SUMMER WRITING ASSIGNMENT

THE BOOKS: Choose and read THREE of the following books. (See the back for a little summary blurb about each

book.) Then choose ONE of the THREE you read and complete the written assignment below.

- Buddha Boy*, Kathe Koja
- The Chosen*, Chaim Potok
- The Contender*, Robert Lipsyte
- Jacob Have I Loved*, Katherine Paterson
- Monster*, Walter Dean Myers
- The Pigman*, Paul Zindel
- Stargirl*, Jerry Spinelli
- When You Reach Me*, Rebecca Stead

THE TASK: Each of these books is considered to be critically acclaimed literature for young adults. Each was written

by its author to address realistic problems that teenagers could relate to in their own lives. After you have read the book, construct a response to **all** of the following questions in a one-page, multi-paragraph essay:

- Does any of what you've read hold any significance to you? Does it recall memories? Does it affirm or contradict any of your own attitudes or perceptions? What will you take away from this reading experience?*

THE FORMAT:

essay must be typed; one-page; multi-paragraph; double-spaced; 1-1.25" margins; 12 point, Times New Roman font

AVOID USING "I THINK," "IN MY OPINION," AND "I FEEL"!!!! We know these are your thoughts and opinions,

so you don't need to tell us.

☐ PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH THIS SHEET TO THE LETTER.

☐ Your eighth grade humanities teacher will collect and grade this essay.

☐ This is the introduction of your writing to your new humanities teacher—show them what you've got! Take the time to put forth your best work and make a strong impression. (You know what they say about first impressions...) Perhaps you should complete this at the beginning of the summer and not at the end...or at least write a DRAFT of it as soon as possible.

Buddha Boy, Kathe Koja

The kids at school call Jinsen "Buddha Boy"—he wears oversize tie-dyed dragon T-shirts, shaves his head, and always seems to be smiling. He's clearly a freak. Then Justin is paired with him for a class project. As he gets to know Jinsen and his incredible artistic talent, Justin questions his own beliefs. But being friends with Buddha Boy isn't simple, especially when Justin realizes that he's going to have to take sides. What matters more: the high school social order or getting to know someone extraordinary?

The Chosen, Chaim Potok

The Chosen chronicles the friendship between Danny Saunders, a boy from a Hasidic family, and the more assimilated Reuven Malter, as they come of age in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The novel begins just before D-Day and traces the unlikely friendship of two Jewish teens as they watch World War II draw to a close and the new state of Israel emerge. The story revolves around the evolving, and sometimes painful, relationships between these boys and their fathers, and the conflicts the young men must face as they come of age. Though on the surface it explores religious faith—the intellectually committed as well as the passionately observant—the struggles addressed in *The Chosen* are familiar to families of all faiths and in all nations.

The Contender, Robert Lipsyte

Alfred's life is going nowhere fast. He's a high-school dropout working at a grocery store. His best friend is drifting behind a haze of drugs and violence, and now some street punks are harassing him for something he didn't do. Feeling powerless and afraid, Alfred gathers up the courage to visit Donatelli's Gym, the neighborhood's boxing club. He wants to be a champion—on the streets and in his own life. Alfred doesn't quite understand when Mr. Donatelli tells him, "It's the climbing that makes the man. Getting to the top is an extra reward." In the end, he learns that a winner isn't necessarily the one standing when the fight is over. Teens and adults alike will be knocked out by this powerful story of how a frightened boy becomes a man.

Jacob Have I Loved, Katherine Paterson

Sara Louise Bradshaw is sick and tired of her beautiful twin Caroline. Ever since they were born, Caroline has been the pretty one, the talented one, the better sister. Even now, Caroline seems to take everything: Louise's friends, their

parents' love, her dreams for the future. For once in her life, Louise wants to be the special one. But in order to do that, she must first figure out who she is . . . and find a way to make a place for herself outside her sister's shadow.

Monster, Walter Dean Myers

Steve Harmon, 16, is accused of serving as a lookout for a robbery of a Harlem drugstore. The owner was shot and killed, and now Steve is in prison awaiting trial for murder. From there, he tells about his case and his incarceration. Many elements of this story are familiar, but Myers keeps it fresh and alive by telling it from an unusual perspective. Steve, an amateur filmmaker, recounts his experiences in the form of a movie screenplay. His striking scene-by-scene narrative of how his life has dramatically changed is riveting.

Interspersed within the script are diary entries in which the teen vividly describes the nightmarish conditions of his confinement.

The Pigman, Paul Zindel

For sophomores John and Lorraine, the world feels meaningless; nothing is important. They *certainly* can never please their parents, and school is a chore. To pass the time, they play pranks on unsuspecting people. It's during one of these pranks that they meet the "Pigman"--a fat, balding old man with a zany smile plastered on his face. In spite of themselves, John and Lorraine soon find that they're caught up in Mr. Pignati's zest for life. In fact, they become so involved that they begin to destroy the only corner of the world that's ever mattered to them.

Stargirl, Jerry Spinelli

Stargirl. From the day she arrives at quiet Mica High in a burst of color and sound, the hallways hum with the murmur of "Stargirl, Stargirl." She captures Leo Borlock's heart with just one smile. She sparks a school-spirit revolution with just one cheer. The students of Mica High are enchanted. At first. Then they turn on her. Stargirl is suddenly shunned for everything that makes her different, and Leo, panicked and desperate with love, urges her to become the very thing that can destroy her: normal. In this celebration of nonconformity, Newbery Medalist Jerry Spinelli weaves a tense, emotional tale about the perils of popularity and the thrill and inspiration of first love.

When You Reach Me, Rebecca Stead

Four mysterious letters change Miranda's world forever.

By sixth grade, Miranda and her best friend, Sal, know how to navigate their New York City neighborhood. They know where it's safe to go, like the local grocery store, and they know whom to avoid, like the crazy guy on the corner. But things start to unravel. Sal gets punched by a new kid for what seems like no reason, and he shuts Miranda out of his life. The apartment key that Miranda's mom keeps hidden for emergencies is stolen. And then Miranda finds a mysterious note scrawled on a tiny slip of paper:

I am coming to save your friend's life, and my own.

I must ask two favors. First, you must write me a letter.

The notes keep coming, and Miranda slowly realizes that whoever is leaving them knows all about her, including things that have not even happened yet. Each message brings her closer to believing that only she can prevent a tragic death. Until the final note makes her think she's too late.