

## **Required Summer Writing Assignment for 2020-2021 School Year Students Entering Grade 8**

Dear Future Eighth Grader & Parents of a Future Eighth Grader:

In order to prepare our future 8th graders for the high school selection process in the Fall, we are **requiring** all 8th grade students to complete a summer writing assignment before the start of the school year. Many high schools require an essay from students as part of the high school selection process.

The essay must be typed, Times New Roman and 12pt font. The essay may be single or double spaced, but must not exceed a 1 page limit. The student must include their name and ID# at the top of their essay. This is an opportunity for the student to explain to a school(s) why he/she/they is a perfect fit for that school.

The topics addressed in the essay should include answers to the following prompts:

Who am I? What do I want to get out of my high school experience? What can I contribute to the school?

It is recommended that the student and parents visit the website of various high schools to gain information about the mission statement of the school, the programs and activities offered and other important information to help the student and parent make an informed decision before the high school selection process. Students and parents can also visit [The School District of Philadelphia High School Directory Fall 2020 Admissions](https://www.philasd.org/studentplacement/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2019/09/HS-Directory-2020.pdf) for a list of high schools in the Philadelphia School District.

<https://www.philasd.org/studentplacement/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2019/09/HS-Directory-2020.pdf>

## **Recommended Summer Reading for 2020-2021 School Year Students Entering Grade 8**

Studies have shown that students can lose a month or more of academic progress if they do not continue reading over the summer. As a school, we are committed to providing your child with a rigorous learning environment, which includes maintaining high expectations over the summer. The 8th Grade Literacy teachers at Baldi Middle School have **recommended summer reading** for all students. There is no assignment associated with these summer reading options, they are simply an opportunity for students to continue reading throughout the summer.

**Directions:** Please select **one novel** to read over the course of the summer break. Six options with different Lexile levels are suggested below. The Lexile level corresponds with the difficulty of a text. If you are a strong, proficient reader you may want to choose the novel with a higher Lexile. If you are a struggling reader, you may want to choose the novel with a lower Lexile. If you need help selecting a novel, email your current

Literacy teacher who can point you in the right direction. ***You are not required to purchase the novel. You may borrow the novel from a library or download on an E-Reader or as a pdf.***

**Brown Girl Dreaming (Lexile 990):** by Jacqueline Woodson

The author shares her childhood memories and reveals the first sparks that ignited her writing career in free-verse poems about growing up in the North and South.

**Return to Sender (Lexile 890):** After Tyler's father is injured in a tractor accident, his family is forced to hire migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm from foreclosure. Tyler isn't sure what to make of these workers. Are they undocumented? And what about the three daughters, particularly Mari, the oldest, who is proud of her Mexican heritage but also increasingly connected to her American life. Her family lives in constant fear of being discovered by the authorities and sent back to the poverty they left behind in Mexico. Can Tyler and Mari find a way to be friends despite their differences? In a novel full of hope, but no easy answers, Julia Alvarez weaves a beautiful and timely story that will stay with readers long after they finish it.

**Lord of the Flies: William Golding (Lexile 790)** William Golding's compelling story about a group of very ordinary boys marooned on a coral island has become a modern classic. At first it seems as though it is all going to be great fun; but the fun before long becomes furious and life on the island turns into a nightmare of panic and death. As ordinary standards of behaviour collapse, the whole world the boys know collapses with them—the world of cricket and homework and adventure stories—and another world is revealed beneath, primitive and terrible. Labeled a parable, an allegory, a myth, a morality tale, a parody, a political treatise, even a vision of the apocalypse, **Lord of the Flies** has established itself as a true classic.

**The Five People You Meet In Heaven: Mitch Albom (Lexile 780)** Eddie is a wounded war veteran, an old man who has lived, in his mind, an uninspired life. His job is fixing rides at a seaside amusement park. On his 83rd birthday, a tragic accident kills him as he tries to save a little girl from a falling cart. He awakes in the afterlife, where he learns that heaven is not a destination, but an answer. In heaven, five people explain your life to you. Some you knew, others may have been strangers. One by one, from childhood to soldier to old age, Eddie's five people revisit their connections to him on earth, illuminating the mysteries of his "meaningless" life, and revealing the haunting secret behind the eternal question: "Why was I here?"

**Feed: M.T. Anderson (Lexile 770)** For Titus and his friends, it started out like any ordinary trip to the moon - a chance to party during spring break and play with some stupid low-grav at the Ricochet Lounge. But that was before the crazy hacker caused all their feeds to malfunction, sending them to the hospital to lie around with nothing inside their heads for days. And it was before Titus met Violet, a beautiful, brainy teenage girl who has decided to fight the feed and its omnipresent ability to categorize human thoughts and desires. Following in the footsteps of George Orwell, Anthony Burgess, and Kurt Vonnegut Jr., M. T. Anderson has created a not-so-brave new world — and a smart, savage satire that has captivated readers with its view of an imagined future that veers unnervingly close to the here and now.

**Ms. Marvel Volume 1: No Normal** by G. Willow Wilson (Graphic Novel)

Kamala Khan is an ordinary girl from Jersey City - until she is suddenly empowered with extraordinary gifts. But who truly is the all-new Ms. Marvel? Teenager? Muslim? Inhuman? Find out as she takes the Marvel Universe by storm! As Kamala discovers the dangers of her newfound powers, she unlocks a secret behind them as well. Is Kamala ready to wield these immense new gifts? Or will the weight of the legacy before her be too much to handle? Kamala has no idea either. But she's comin' for you, New York! It's history in the making from acclaimed writer G. Willow Wilson (Air, Cairo) and beloved artist Adrian Alphona (Runaways)!

If you have any questions about the Required Summer Writing Assignment or the Recommended Summer Reading, please contact Mrs. Nuskey ( [jillevy@philasd.org](mailto:jillevy@philasd.org) ), Mrs. Eiler ( [deiler@philasd.org](mailto:deiler@philasd.org) ), or Mrs. Stavrakis ( [jstavrakis@philasd.org](mailto:jstavrakis@philasd.org) ) before June 12, 2020. We hope you enjoy your summer and look forward to seeing you in the fall.