Dear Parent/Guardian,

In order to provide students with a smooth transition in language arts between grade levels, our district has developed a summer project for your child. The summer project was created in order to maintain the skills necessary for success in language arts classes at the middle school level. The project will promote independent reading and/or writing that will facilitate students as life-long learners. Students will be expected to submit the project to their teacher on September 4, 2015.

This project will be graded as 5% of the first marking period grade.

To access the summer assignment via the Internet

- Click on “Curriculum and Instruction”.
- Choose “Summer Curricular Projects”.
- On the left side menu, click on “2015 Summer Reading Projects”.
- Find your child’s project posted by the grade s/he is entering for the 2015-2016 academic school year.

Have fun completing the project and enjoy your summer! If you have any questions about the project, please call 732-572-2289 x 2561.

Sincerely,
Bob Coleman
Assistant Director of Literacy and Social Studies
SUMMER PROJECT DIRECTIONS

To aid in your transition to the next grade, you are required to complete a language arts summer reading project. As always, you are encouraged to read many books this summer, however you are only required to complete one assignment. Upon your return to school in September, you will have a short writing to do in response to your summer work.

➢ Please choose ONE of the mandatory reading/writing projects below:
  1. Summer Investigation (Informational)
  2. Prequel/Sequel/New Version (Narrative)
  3. Dialectical Journal

➢ Directions for each are as follows:

1. Summer Investigation (Informational)
   • Ask a Question in which you have a strong interest.
     o For instance: What was my grandmother’s childhood like? Who is the best baseball player of all time? What was it like to be a knight? How do I build a solar panel? What is love? Who sells the healthiest fast food in Piscataway? Can I train my cat?
     o There are MANY possibilities...only you know what this question might be!
   • Search for answers to your question.
     o Interview people.
     o Read and research in books and online.
     o Experiment. Try things out.
     o Be creative in your methods of finding out as much as you can about your question.
     o KEEP TRACK OF EVERYTHING YOU DO TO FIND THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION.
       ▪ Log HOW and WHEN you did your searching. You should be able to tell anyone to whom you present your Investigation where and when you found your information.
       ▪ You can keep track in a notebook, in a folder, on a tablet or computer, etc.
     o You should be able to present your search in an engaging, clear way.
   • Present your Findings and Conclusion in an engaging, informative, and thorough manner. This might be in written form, video form, PowerPoint, etc.
     o Your presentation should include the following five sections:
       1. Your Question
       2. Your Search Process
       3. What You Learned/Your Search Results/ The Answer
       4. What This Means to You/ Why You Researched This Topic
       5. References
For more detailed information on each section please visit the district website’s Summer Project page and view the document titled “Components of the Summer Project Presentation.”

** This presentation will be handed in to your teacher on Friday, September 4th.

- **Upon your return to school**, you will be asked to write a short reflection on how you completed your Summer Investigation (3-4 paragraphs). You might tell about your successes and failures throughout your research journey, discuss your feelings as you researched, or write about a particularly exciting find or a fun experience during your search. You will be able to use your tracking log to support your writing.

- Your handed-in project will be graded on the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Each section of the presentation is complete and presented in an engaging and clear manner. The student answered the question posed, as well as additional questions that rose during research, exemplifying a thorough research process. A variety of innovative sources (interviews, experiments done, etc) are cited. Shows enthusiastic interest and engagement with the search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sections of the presentation are complete and are presented in a clear manner. The student has clearly answered the question posed and the search process seems thorough. Multiple sources are cited (internet, books, interview, etc). Shows interest and engagement with the search.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sections of the presentation are mostly complete. However, they may lack clarity. The initial research question is answered, however the process is unclear, disconnected, or lacking in relevance. Minimal sources are cited (ie only internet sources). Shows little interest or engagement with the search.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Investigation may or may not be complete and/or sections are missing, disorganized, and/or unclear. The initial research question may or may not be answered and there is minimal evidence of the research process. No sources are cited. Shows no interest or engagement with the search.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Presentation fails to meet even the limited requirements for a 1 listed above.</td>
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</tbody>
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2. Prequel/Sequel/New Version (Narrative)

- Read a novel from the following list or one that is recommended to you by your teacher or your school’s librarian.
  4. *Titanic: Voices from Disaster* by Deborah Hopkinson

- Once finished, write a prequel, sequel, or a rewritten passage that is told from a different point of view.

- **Prequels** or **sequels** should:
  - reflect the novel’s style, point of view, tone, and plot (you want to imitate the author as best you can).

- If you **rewrite a passage**, the passage should:
  - reflect the novel’s theme and plot but exemplify the perspective of a different character (or of one of the characters, if the novel is told in the voice of a 3rd person narrator).
  - You might also create a fictional character if you’ve read a nonfiction text (ie historical fiction).

- All written pieces should be about 2-4 pages typed (double-spaced) or 3-5 pages handwritten. Neatness should be considered.

** This written piece will be handed in to your teacher on Friday, September 4th.

- **Upon your return to school,** you will be asked to write a **short** explanation of how your prequel/sequel/or rewritten point of view passage relates to the original text. You might write about which of the author’s craft moves you tried to mimic or how you knew from reading what the alternate point of view character was most likely thinking and/or feeling. You will be able to use your work to support your writing.

- Your handed-in project will be graded on the following rubric (see next page):
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The narrative clearly and closely reflects the original theme, plot, setting, tone, point of view (for prequel and sequel only) and style. The writing goes beyond the expectation of the last school year. The writing is polished, neat, and free of any errors. Shows enthusiastic interest and engagement with the text/writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The narrative clearly reflects the original theme, plot, setting, tone, point of view (for prequel and sequel only), and style. The writing meets the expectation of the last school year. The writing is neat and free of most errors. Shows interest and engagement with the text/writing.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>The narrative superficially connects to the original but does reflect the original in some ways. The writing is approaching the expectation of the last school year, and may exhibit patterns of errors. Shows little interest or engagement with the text/writing.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>The narrative does not clearly connect to the original or is incomplete. The writing is well below the expectation of the last school year and exhibits many errors. Shows no interest or engagement with the text/writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The narrative fails to meet even the limited requirements for a 1 listed above.</td>
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3. Dialectical Journal (Literary Analysis)

- Choose one of the following texts to read:
  4. *Titanic: Voices from Disaster* by Deborah Hopkinson

- Find 3 quotes from different sections of the book (one from the beginning, one from the middle, and one from the end) that make you think or are important to the story.
  - Remember: A quote doesn’t have to be dialogue. It can include anything at all from the book.

- Copy each quote and the page number where it appears.

- Write a short explanation that analyzes and shows the meaning of that quote. What thoughts did you have while reading the quote? Why is it significant? How does it relate to your understanding of the book? (See included example)
  - Possible Explanation Topics:
    - How this part gives insight into character
    - Why this part is important to plot
    - How this part exemplifies the author’s writing style
    - How this part reveals the theme of the book
    - How this part shows conflict in the book or helps you understand something new about conflict.
  - This should NOT be a plot summary, but should instead show your own original thoughts and opinions about what you read.

- Please see sample below (following the rubric) for further clarity on formatting and explanation expectations.

** This work will be handed in to your teacher on Friday, September 4th.

- **Upon your return to school**, you will be asked to write a short analysis of your book (3-4 paragraphs). You might write about a specific character, the theme, or plot. You will be able to use your summer work to support your writing.

- Your handed-in project will be graded on the following rubric (see next page):
## Dialectical Journal Rubric

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<td>4</td>
<td>Journal entries are complete. Journals are thorough, insightful, and thought-provoking; reflecting careful reading and appropriate selection of text examples. Comments, observations, and explanations relate directly to the text examples and provide perceptive reflection that demonstrates the ability to read critically. Entries may include consideration of character motivation and theme, as well as advanced topics (such as author’s writing choices/motivations, the implications of point of view, and/or the effectiveness of literary features). Shows enthusiastic interest and engagement with the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Journal entries are complete. Journals are for the most part thorough, insightful, and thought-provoking; reflecting careful reading and appropriate selection of text examples. Comments, observations, and explanations for the most part relate directly to the text examples and provide adequate reflection that demonstrates the growing ability to read critically. Entries mostly focus around consideration of character motivation and theme. Shows interest and engagement with the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Journal entries are complete. Journals are somewhat insightful; reflecting a general understanding of the text and adequate text example choice. Comments, observations, and explanations may or may not relate directly to the text examples. Some entries provide exemplify deeper understanding and reflection, while others are superficial/and or simple paraphrases of the text. Shows little interest or engagement with the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Journal entries may or may not be complete. Journals for the most part reflect little understanding of the text and text examples seem randomly chosen. Comments, observations, and explanations seem unrealistic or improbable. Entries are primarily a summary of the text and include superficial and/or off-topic responses. Shows no interest or engagement with the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Journal entries fail to meet even the limited requirements for a 1 listed above.</td>
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Examples:

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<tr>
<th>Quote Beginning</th>
<th>Explanation &amp; Analysis Beginning</th>
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<td>“Right after Aaron’s birth, at his bris party, when all the relatives had been making fools of themselves over him, Hannah had taken a ballpoint pen and written a string of numbers on the inside of her own left arm, hard enough to almost break the skin. She thought that it might please Grandpa Will as much as the new baby had.” (9)</td>
<td>Although Hannah offended her grandpa by emulating the scar of a traumatizing memory, as a reader, it seems very apparent that she did not mean any harm. Like most kids, Hannah only wanted to imitate someone that she looks up to, a role model in her life. Maybe Hannah’s grandpa should explain the significance of the numbers on his arm, and perhaps she would have a new understanding of not only him as a person, but her culture as a whole.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Quote Middle</th>
<th>Explanation &amp; Analysis Middle</th>
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<td>“All children are from the future. I am from the past. And the past tells us what we must do in the future. That is why adults do the teaching and children the learning. So you must listen to me when I tell you what we must do now is pray. Pray, for we are all in God’s hands.” (78)</td>
<td>Hannah’s family and culture seems deeply rooted in history and tradition. Rabbi Boruch seems to think that Hannah lacks credibility simply because she is young, but maybe she does have valid thoughts and ideas, regardless of her age. It must be very disheartening for Hannah to want to be heard and understood, but continue to be held back because of cultural and societal rules that she cannot control. Although I do respect the idea that past generations should help guide the members of the future generation, I think that it is also important to listen to the thoughts of others and take everyone’s opinion into account out of mutual respect.</td>
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<th>Quote End</th>
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<td>“At last Hannah looked up. Her aunt was staring at her, as if really seeing her for the first time.” (163)</td>
<td>This quote truly shows the theme of the novel as a whole. The Devil’s Arithmetic focuses so much on memories and the importance of acknowledging and respecting our history. Even though Hannah always heard the stories about the Nazis and concentration camps, and poor treatment of her ancestors, she has a new understanding now that she has temporarily lived the life of Chaya Abramowicz. Hannah really feels like a new person after gaining this experience and knowledge of her heritage, and I believe that her aunt can finally recognize that newfound appreciation. Even at holidays and family reunions and other events, so many of us hear stories from our grandparents and older relatives, but very few of us really listen to the lesson that they are trying to teach. Sometimes our family members are untapped resources of information, offering opinions from their personal experience, giving new insight, or even witnessing significant historical events. Though the culture presented in the novel does not reflect my personal family heritage, I am really interested in doing some research of my own in an effort to gain a better understanding of who I am.</td>
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