GRISWOLD MIDDLE SCHOOL
ROCKY HILL, CT
REQUIRED SUMMER READING

FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 8

All students entering grade 8 at Griswold Middle School will participate in a required summer reading program. The program has been introduced to all students during their language arts classes. The requirements are as follows:

• **Students entering grade 8 are required to read TWO books from a list of ten provided for that grade level.**

The book lists from which the students must choose are attached. Lists are also posted in the classrooms, in the school office, and at the public library. All books on the list are available from the following sources:

- The Cora J. Belden Library will have extra copies of each book set aside in a special display. The school library copies will be available through the public library during the summer.
- Local bookstores have the book lists and are planning accordingly.

Teachers are planning activities to help the students meet the summer reading requirements:

- Teachers will preview each of the books on the list with their students in order to help students with their choices.
- Students will be encouraged to take notes while reading. The teachers will provide note-taking organizers and instruction on how to use them.

During the first week of school in the Fall, students will complete writing assignments in Language Arts class:

- The 8th grade students will receive an assignment based on one of the books read. The teacher will decide which of the two books each student will write about.
- Students may not use their books, but may use their notes during the writing assignment. **Only the student's handwritten notes on the note-taking organizer will be allowed. No type-written notes or extra sheets will be permitted.** All writing will be done in class.
- The assignments will be graded by the Language Arts teachers and will count as a grade for the first marking period.

Parents who have questions may call their child's teacher or Dr. Thibodeau at the Middle School, at 258-7741.

GRISWOLD MIDDLE SCHOOL
ROCKY HILL, CT
REQUIRED SUMMER READING

FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 8

INSTRUCTIONS

Students entering grade 8 must choose TWO books from the following list. Several copies of each book are available at the Cora J. Belden Library. You should be able to buy or order these books from local bookstores or order them online.

These books are listed in approximate order of difficulty, with the least difficult book listed first. The selections represent a range of interests, levels, and cultures. Students should make their choices based on their interests and abilities.

Two note-taking organizers are attached. Students are encouraged to use the organizers as they read to record the important elements of each of the books. **Only these organizers may be used during the writing assignment to be given in September. Type-written notes or other extra sheets will not be allowed.**

GRADE 8 SELECTIONS

Also Known as Rowan Pohi, by Ralph Fletcher

It starts as a prank. One summer day, high school student Bobby Steele and his friends find an application to Whitestone Academy, a very prestigious prep school, on a table at IHOP. They decide to fill it out using a fake name (Rowan Pohi), just to see if they can get him accepted. They send it in, complete with fake teacher recommendations and grades, and expect that to be the end of it. When "Rowan" actually gets accepted, Bobby, eager to leave his undesirable life behind, decides to assume Rowan's identity and take this chance at a better life. How long can he get away with it?

The Skin I'm In, by Sharon Flake

Seventh grader Maleeka Madison is miserable in her inner-city middle school. She is teased constantly by her peers about the darkness of her skin and her unstylish, second-hand clothing. Although very bright, Maleeka feels that her brains are not as valuable as the social acceptance she desperately wants. Her relationship with Miss Saunders, a new English teacher, helps her learn valuable lessons about dealing with the negative attention of her peers.

Touching Spirit Bear, by Ben Mikaelsen

At age 15, Cole Matthews has been in trouble with the law before, but this time it's serious. He's been arrested for causing permanent injuries to another boy in a brutal fight and the court is trying to decide what to do with him. His probation officer, a Tungit Indian, suggests Circle Justice, a trial program where he must spend a year alone on a remote Alaska island. So Cole is banished to the island to survive alone in the wilderness.

Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment, by James Patterson

Fourteen-year-old Maximum Ride, better known as Max, knows what it's like to soar above the world. She and all the members of the "Flock" – Fang, Iggy, Nudge, Gasman, and Angel – are just ordinary kids, only they have wings and can fly. It may seem like a dream come true, but their lives can become a nightmare at any time.

Angel, the youngest member of the "Flock," is kidnapped and taken back to the "School" where she and the others were genetically engineered by sinister scientists. Max leads the others on a rescue mission that could mean death for all of them.

Seedfolks, by Paul Fleischman

A vacant lot, rat-infested and filled with garbage, looked like no place for a garden. This unlikely garden spot is in a city neighborhood of strangers where no one seems to care. The change starts on the day when a young girl clears a small space and digs into the hard-packed soil to plant her precious bean seeds. Suddenly, others see the possibilities and find hope in this small plot of land. Thirteen very different characters tell this amazing story about a garden that transforms a neighborhood.

Messenger, by Lois Lowry

This novel unites characters from *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue.* Twelve-year-old Mattie lives in Village, a community of honesty, kindness, generosity, and hospitality, which welcomes "broken" people from other, less tolerant communities. Mattie has a special gift. He is the only one who can travel through Forest unharmed, so the community depends on him to carry messages to other villages. When the people of Village start trading, they begin to change, putting their own selfish interests ahead of the well-being of community. Matty must make one final journey through the suddenly hostile forest to bring back Kira, the Seer's daughter, before Village closes its borders to outsiders forever.

The Devil's Arithmetic, by Jane Yolen

Young Hannah is not interested in her family's Jewish heritage. She dreads another family gathering where she must politely listen to their boring stories of the past. At one of these gatherings however, she opens the door and finds herself transported to the past. The year is 1940, the place is Poland. Her name is now Chaya and she is about to learn about the Nazis and the Holocaust first-hand.

The Contender, by Robert Lipsyte

This is the story of Alfred Brooks, a seventeen-year-old boy growing up in a rough neighborhood in Harlem. Alfred has quit school and is working as a grocery clerk. He is constantly facing the challenge of gangs and drugs. While his best friend gets involved with drugs, Alfred decides that he wants to be a boxer. The Contender recounts his struggle to become a champion fighter, and the ending just might surprise you.

Where the Lilies Bloom, by Vera and Bill Cleaver

This is the amazing story of Mary Call, a fourteen-year-old girl who has to take on the responsibility of keeping her orphaned family together. While Mary tries to keep her older, dream-filled sister from marrying a "villain," she becomes incredibly courageous and creative in thinking of ways to support her family.

Travel Team, by Mike Lupica

Seventh grader Danny Walker is a basketball fanatic. He is smart, talented, fast, and dedicated, but short. When he fails to make the travel team, he forms his own squad with others cut from the team, with his unreliable dad as the coach. They make it all the way to the championship game against their arch rivals. A fun book for sports fans.

Name _____ Date _____

Use this organizer to record important information about the book you are reading to meet the requirements for the summer reading program. <u>You may use only this organizer in September when you respond to a writing prompt about this book. No other sheets will be allowed.</u>

I. Title _____

II. Author _____

III. Setting (a description of the time period and location)

_____

_____

_____

IV. Main Characters (Names and descriptions)

_____

_____

_____

_____

V. Plot Summary (Problem or situation, important events, outcome)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Continue on the back of this page, if necessary.

Name _____ Date _____

Use this organizer to record important information about the book you are reading to meet the requirements for the summer reading program. <u>You may use only this organizer in September when you respond to a writing prompt about this book. No other sheets will be allowed.</u>

I. Title _____

II. Author _____

III. Setting (a description of the time period and location)

_____

_____

_____

IV. Main Characters (Names and descriptions)

_____

_____

_____

_____

V. Plot Summary (Problem or situation, important events, outcome)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Continue on the back of this page, if necessary.