

To all future Desert Hills Middle School Honors Language Arts students:

Welcome to honors eighth and ninth grade. We are excited to have you in our classes next year. All Desert Hill Middle School honors students are expected to complete assigned summer reading for their honors language arts classes next year.

Incoming eighth grade honors students are expected to read one of the following books: *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott or *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. These books are available in local book stores and online for various prices.

Incoming ninth grade honors students are expected to read *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak. This book is also available in local bookstores and online.

These books will be discussed and tested in the opening days of the new school year. Students will be writing in-class, open-book essays during the first week of school. **Each honors student needs to purchase the appropriate novel for his/her grade level since the book needs to be annotated as the student reads.**

Please **buy the book** early in order to read and annotate it throughout the summer. Students who wait to purchase their copies always have a difficult time finding them in the local stores later in the summer. **Bring your annotated copy to the first class of the year for points.** The number of points depends on how well the novel is annotated.

Annotations help prepare students for the first week's discussions, essays, and activities. Annotating novels also encourages active reading skills. Instructions on how to annotate a novel follow this letter. It is important to remember the annotation instructions are a guide. It is best to find one's own method/system of annotating.

If there are any questions about the summer reading assignments, please contact the honors language arts teacher for the appropriate grade.

Eighth grade: Miss Livingston (mary.livingston@washk12.org)

Ninth grade: Mrs. Shepherd (elise.shepherd@washk12.org)

How to Annotate a Text

- annotate** –v. 1. to supply with critical or explanatory notes; comment upon
in notes: to annotate the works of Shakespeare
2. to make annotations or notes

<http://dictionary.reference.com/>

Use this for the assigned summer reading.

Incoming **eighth** honors: *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott OR
The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

Incoming **ninth** grader honors: *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

Active Reading and Annotation Methods

1. Highlight, circle, or underline key information, including vocabulary you don't understand, significant quotes, references to other literary works, or any parts of the text relating to themes, significant characters, or events.
2. While you read, use a pencil to make notes in the margins about the key material you marked. Use punctuation marks such as stars, arrows, question marks, check marks, and brackets to mark the part of the text you may want to come back to. Come up with your own unique system to mark what you think is important or questionable. Ask questions, make comments, and define words as you read.
3. At the end of each chapter, summarize the main ideas/events in the chapter in one or two sentences.
4. Use the inside front cover of the book to keep a list of important information with page number references in the book. Some examples of what to list are important names of characters, memorable quotes, or key questions you have about the text.
5. Use the inside back cover to make a list of key vocabulary words and definitions from the text. Choose words unique to the author/story/culture or advanced vocabulary.

**Information on how to annotate a book was taken from <http://www.collegeboard.com>

Try to do these things:

1. Use a consistent system. Use the same abbreviations and symbols every time you annotate.
2. Use one color of ink or pencil to make initial markings while reading; then go back with another color or colors to mark more thoroughly once you finish a larger section and have had time to think about it. Why? You may change your mind or not read as carefully the first time, and may have other discoveries about earlier readings and findings. Remember to write annotations as you mark.
3. Do underlining, circling, and annotating as you read.
4. At chapter endings, write the chapter summaries.
5. Be neat and be disciplined about the annotating.

Parts taken from "How to Mark a Book" by Mortimer J. Adler (1902-2001)