

Dear Parents,

August 2, 2018

As you probably know, part of our job in 9th Grade English is to provide a rich literary base for students. Research shows that people who have the ability to analyze text and communicate are more successful as adults - whether entering the workforce before or after college. It is our job as English teachers to foster this ability.

In years past, we have selected literature that we thought would be interesting for students. Depending on the particular student, our choices were hit or miss - sometimes the child loved the book, sometimes not.

**This year will be different.** Instead of forcing students to read a particular set of books, they will be allowed to choose most of their own books within specific guidelines of literary merit and Lexile level (reading level). We think this approach will help even the most reluctant reader find literature that they can appreciate.

Not surprisingly, though, there's a potential downside. Good literature looks at life experiences from a variety of perspectives and forces us to consider the world in ways we may never have imagined. Authors are often brutally honest in examining how we humans respond to difficult situations. Sometimes we are heroic, sometimes we are not - but a good book will expose truths about the human condition. And quite honestly, sometimes those truths are uncomfortable.

Because the students will be choosing for themselves, it is entirely likely that your child will come across a book that has situations, language, or even graphics that are disturbing or conflict with your family's beliefs or morals.

We understand and fully support that you might not find every book appropriate for your child. We respect your right to monitor your child's reading and encourage you to do so.

If you don't want your child to read a particular book, please have that family discussion. For classroom purposes, we will assume that you have given them permission to read whatever they've chosen. We will only intervene if we think the book is too low on the Lexile scale or lacks literary merit.

To facilitate your decision making, <https://www.common sense media.org> has reviews for parents that can help you make a decision about whether a text is appropriate. If you can't find the book there, a Google search should help you find what you need.

We will still be reading a few whole-class books and a variety of short stories, articles, and poems. This will likely include books like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, *The Hate U Give*, *The Hunger Games*, *A Brave New World*, etc. If you have any concerns about these, please bring them to our attention by August 12, 2018.

Please feel free to email if you have any questions, and sign the form on page two of this letter. Thank you so much!

Sincerely,

**Ms. Lackey**

Please have your child return the form on the next page to class tomorrow.

My signature below indicates that I have read the parent letter dated August 2, 2018, from my child's English teacher. I understand my child will be allowed the choice of what to read and that I am responsible for any restrictions on what s/he reads this year.

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Student Name

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Period

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Date

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Parent Name

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Parent Signature