

Dear Eighth Graders and Families,

Welcome to eighth grade! Your best and final year at Penn Alexander.

Reading is both a crucial skill and one of life's greatest pleasures. For both of these reasons, we in the Middle School want to encourage our students to read as much as possible.

In an effort to promote literacy and maintain reading skills, it has been decided to require summer reading for incoming eighth graders.

Incoming eighth graders are required to read two text, *Chains* and *Chasing Lincoln's Killer*. These books will be discussed in class during the first weeks of school, and one of the first major writing assignments in Literacy will be centered around *Chains*.

One of the skills we encourage is that of active reading. With that in mind, students are asked to annotate and mark the assigned reading. Some strategies to keep in mind:

- ~Track characters in the assigned literary text. Being sure to pay attention to character descriptions, motivations, changes over time, etc.
- ~ Mark (underline, circle, or bracket) important moments in the text. These markings should be accompanied with marginal notes as why you circled, underlined, or bracketed the specific pieces of text. (Feel free to write in the actual texts.)
- ~At the end of a chapter/section, write about the important concepts or plot points that occurred in that chapter/section.

The skill of annotating a text, which is practiced throughout middle school, continues to be an expectation in eighth grade. This work will provide a way to enter into the work and book conversations that will begin in September, so a cursory, casual read will not be sufficient.

Enjoy your summer! Explore your neighborhood, spend time with your family and friends, be read to and read--- any and everything, whether magazines, newspapers, brochures, books, etc. Even in the middle years, many children still enjoy having someone read to them.

Happy Reading!