

June 2011  
Sivan 5771

Dear HALB Parents of Incoming 7th through 8<sup>th</sup> Graders,

It's time to "blast off" with our Summer Reading Program! All of the educational research points to the importance of summer reading. Studies have repeatedly shown that children who continue to read during the summer months perform better in the fall.

Summer reading has been shown to do the following for the student:

- Encourage a love and enjoyment of books
- Provide exposure to a variety of genres
- Increase vocabulary knowledge
- Increase reading fluency
- Develop background concepts and general knowledge
- Provide models of good writing
- Help maintain reading skills learned during the school year
- Provide a sense of participation in the HALB community of readers



We are sure that you will concur that these are all valuable outcomes of summer reading. Of course, the summer reading is designed for your children's enjoyment! **At the beginning of the school year, teachers will be using the summer reading books as a basis for discussion and class work. In grades 7 and 8 there will also be an exam on their books. It is therefore important that students return to school prepared.**

Once again, **one fiction and one non-fiction book are required** per grade level. Grades 7-8 are required to read the assigned fiction book listed by grade level as well as any of the chosen books listed in the non-fiction section.

The list below is **the fiction required reading**.

### **Required 2011 Fiction Reading List**

Incoming Seventh Grader	<u>Among the Hidden</u> by Margaret Peterson Haddix
Incoming Eighth Grader	<u>Year of the Hangman</u> by Gary Blackwood

Please note, if your child finds the novel very challenging, it is acceptable to read with them or to them, but encourage independent reading whenever possible. "Books on tape" is another option, so children can listen to the book and read it at the same time.

## Nonfiction Reading

Nonfiction books are such a rich a source of vocabulary and content area knowledge. Most of us read little nonfiction, yet the fund of information we need is largely based on this genre. Most achievement tests are primarily written with nonfiction selections.

Students in grades 7 and 8 are required to choose from one of the books below :

1. Something Out of Nothing: Marie Curie & Radium (2006) by K. McClafferty
2. Gifted Hands: The Story of Ben Carson (1990) by Gregg Lewis (mature reader)
3. Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream (2009) by T. Stone
4. Hana's Suitcase (2002),by K. Levine
5. Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps (2001) by A. Warren (mature reader)
6. Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese-American Family (1982) by Uchida (mature reader)
7. Trapped by the Ice: Shackleton's Amazing Antarctic Adventure by Michael McCurdy
8. The War to End All Wars: World War I by Russell Freedman
9. Growing Up in Coal Country by Susan Campbell Bartoletti
10. With Every Drop of Blood: A Novel of the Civil War by James Collier and Christopher Collier

Websites of Interest:

- 1 - [Scholastic.com/summerreading/parents](http://Scholastic.com/summerreading/parents)
- 2 - [Readwritethink.org](http://Readwritethink.org) (click on summer activities)
- 3- [www.colorincolorado.org](http://www.colorincolorado.org)

You might like to browse these articles provided by RIF - Reading is Fundamental:

- 1 - "What Can Families Do to Keep Children Reading During the Summer" <http://www.rif.org>
- 2 - Summer Reading Tips for Parents <http://readingrockets.org> Article 36
- 3 - Summer Reading Adventures for You and Your Kids <http://readingrockets.org> Article 291
- 4 - Newbery Medal Winners, 1992 - Present <http://www.ala.org>

HALB is proud to aim higher in all educational realms. We consider summer reading very important in developing lifelong reading habits, in maintaining literacy skills, in strengthening independent reading, and in promoting reading for pleasure.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Dovid Plotkin