

June 2019

Dear Rising 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (8A) Student:

In order to maintain and improve your reading skills, you will be required to read Three (3) books over the summer and to respond to them in several different EASY ways. This summer you will have ONE REQUIRED book to read, plus TWO books OF YOUR CHOICE (on your reading level, please!).

The first required book is **Beowulf**. It is the **epic poem** of the NORSE **epic hero** Beowulf. I have several different versions of the book for you to choose from, or you may decide to purchase your own copy. If you borrow a copy from me, please note that these books are **on loan to you only and will need to be returned** at the beginning of school!

You should read these books carefully. The work that you turn in for them **will be graded**. Most private high schools have a list of required books to read each summer, so this will be good practice for you in preparing for high school. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT TO COMPLETE THIS ASSIGNMENT**. This assignment, plus the list of books you read, is **due the first week of English class**. This will be your first literature grade of the year!

Writing Requirements:

1. Keep a list of ALL the books you read this summer, and turn this list in with your assignments. Put a \* by any books you *especially* like and think I should read, too!
2. For **Beowulf**: Like Odysseus, Beowulf is an epic hero. However, because the culture of ancient Greece was quite different than that of the Norse, the two heroes are very different from each other, too. Read a version (I highly recommend *Beowulf: A New Telling* by Robert Nye) of **Beowulf**, and when you finish, **make a mindmap** of him as an **epic hero**. Include his heroic characteristics, his flaws, and his strengths. Be sure to include his adventures, too. As you read, *think about* how he is similar to the Greek demi-gods and how he is different (this should help you with your mindmap!). When you return we will begin Norse mythology, so this will help prepare you for next year!
3. The TWO BOOKS OF YOUR CHOICE must be on your reading level (no skimping by with easy-reader books. You could even enjoy another Rick Riordan book - he has a Norse mythology series out now, too - *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard*, which I highly recommend!)
  - a. For ONE of these two books, just enjoy. Seriously, just enjoy the experience of reading.
  - b. For the SECOND BOOK OF YOUR CHOICE, keep a list of interesting words that strike you as you read. They may be words you know and just love the way they sound. They may be words you have never heard before. They may be words that sound weird or exotic to you. They may be words with different meanings.

You can list as many words as you want, but you must list at least 25 words!!  
Figure out a way to creatively present them that will showcase them in a cool way. Have fun with the language!!

*Happy summer! Happy reading* - Ms. Watkins