

# Independent Reading Parent Notice

*Honors World Literature 2015-16*

Dear 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents,

Happy September - I'm excited to be your student's English teacher this year! As we begin the school year, I'd like to take a moment to tell you about our independent reading initiative. This year, in addition to our study of whole-class texts, students are expected to read independently and consistently in order to develop a *habit* of reading. Studies have consistently shown that independent reading benefits student learning, not only in the language arts but also across the curriculum and throughout life. Reading can relieve stress, build stamina, improve writing, and most importantly, develop empathy and a greater understanding of self and others. Last year, my 9<sup>th</sup> graders read an average of 20 books during the school year. What I hope is that through regular, student-driven practice, students will develop an appreciation of great literature and a love of reading beyond our classroom walls.

To support this goal, students will be allowed to choose what they want to read for pleasure. In addition to the Conestoga library, students will also have access to my personal classroom library, which I have stocked with many popular and high-interest titles for young adults, most of which have been reviewed by the *School Library Journal*. Of course, students may also purchase their own copies of books to bring to class to read. I believe strongly that when students choose their own books, they do so because those books meet their personal intellectual, emotional, and psychological needs. Each student is different, and I want to honor that difference in our reading endeavors this year. In my experience, even students who do not like to read will begin to find pleasure in reading given the right circumstances—the right book and the right time.

To help students find that *right* book this year, I will often take class time to share books that I think might interest them (Ms. Hauer, our school's media specialist, will also share potential titles). Book recommendations are also available on my website, [mrsEbarvia.com](http://mrsEbarvia.com). Only in very rare circumstances will I steer a student away from any particular book. That said, although I personally read widely for titles that may interest my students, I will not necessarily know or remember all the details of every book students choose. As a parent myself, I respect your role in your students' lives; if you are concerned about what your student has personally chosen, please have a conversation with him or her. If you prefer that your student not read a particular title, please return it to school so that it can be re-shelved for others.

Research shows that one of the key factors in the development of lifelong readers is having a "sponsor of literacy," a person who models effective reading habits and puts students in touch with books that may interest them. Please share your own reading life with your students. I can't tell you the number of times that students told me they were reading a book because a family member recommended it. And because I am always on the search for the next great read, please share any book recommendations to me as well, either through your student or via e-mail. Our classroom also gladly accepts book donations should you need to find a new home for some of your favorite titles.

Finally, I ask that you please sign this letter and have your student return it within the first week of school. By signing this, I know that you have read the information provided. For your convenience, a copy of this letter—as well as a few additional resources—is available on my website (navigate to Honors World Literature > Parents). To learn more about the course in general, feel free to browse the website.

I look forward to getting to know your student this year! If you have any questions, please e mail me.

Happy reading,

Tricia Ebarvia  
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Student Name	Parent Signature	Date
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