

Dear In-Coming Freshman,

Hello and allow me to introduce myself – I am Mr. Moffitt, your 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher. Let me be the first to congratulate you on your successful completion of middle school! You’ve all done an outstanding job and the accolades I give you are well deserved (*accolade (n): any award, honor, or laudatory notice*). However, now that you are a high school student it is important to prepare for the level of independence that will be expected. With that in mind, over the summer you are to choose ONE novel from the provided list and read it before the first day of school in September. It is important that you have this completed before September, because you will have an assignment related to your novel due for the first week of school. Now, before you assume that this particular project will ruin your vacation, know this: the books on the list were chosen for their enjoyment factor, and the assignment will be extraordinarily easy **as long as you’ve finished reading**. Ok, here is your official summer reading assignment:

- Choose ONE novel from the list provided and read it over the summer. Your chosen novel must be read by the first day of school in September.
- Create a “Journal” section in your English notebook (your notebook must be a 3-ring binder).
- Write 10 JOURNAL ENTRIES ABOUT YOUR NOVEL IN YOUR JOURNAL SECTION. These journals can be about anything related to your novel (something interesting that happens, how the main character is progressing, your reactions to various parts of the novel, or just anything you want to comment on or write about concerning your novel...really, anything).
- Each journal entry must BE AT LEAST ONE PARAGRAPH (4-5 sentences). You may certainly write more, but make sure you’re writing at least one paragraph per journal entry.
- Bring everything with you to the first day of school, as you will be using your journal entries for an in-class assignment.

Novels can be purchased at Borders, Barnes & Noble, Amazon.com, and many local bookstores. If there are any issues obtaining the novels, please e-mail me at [pmoffitt@mechanicville.org](mailto:pmoffitt@mechanicville.org) and accommodations will be made.

Have a great summer! Relax, enjoy time with family and friends, and come to school in September ready to begin your high school career. I look forward to meeting you!

-Mr. Moffitt

## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Summer Reading List

Directions: Choose ONE novel from the list below and read it over the summer. Remember to complete the journal assignment associated with your novel – directions are in the letter written to you (please e-mail me at [pmoffitt@mechanicville.org](mailto:pmoffitt@mechanicville.org) with any questions). HAVE THE NOVEL READ AND JOURNALS WRITTEN BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

Here is the list (all novel previews are from Amazon.com):

### *Gym Candy* by Carl Deuker

Having grown up in the shadow of his father's failed NFL career, high-school football player Mick Johnson is determined not to make the same mistakes. But when he's tackled just short of the goal in a pivotal game, he decides that vitamin supplements aren't enough and begins purchasing "gym candy," or steroids, from the trainer at his local gym. His performance starts breaking records and his father couldn't be more proud, but along with gains in muscle, he suffers "'roid rage," depression, and unsightly acne. When his secret finally comes out, he attempts suicide. Even after therapy, Mick is left wondering if he'll continue to be tempted by steroids. Deuker skillfully complements a sobering message with plenty of exciting on-field action and locker-room drama, while depicting Mick's emotional struggles with loneliness and insecurity as sensitively and realistically as his physical ones.

### *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers

"Monster" is what the prosecutor called 16-year-old Steve Harmon for his supposed role in the fatal shooting of a convenience-store owner. But was Steve really the lookout who gave the "all clear" to the murderer, or was he just in the wrong place at the wrong time? In this innovative novel by Walter Dean Myers, the reader becomes both juror and witness during the trial of Steve's life. To calm his nerves as he sits in the courtroom, aspiring filmmaker Steve chronicles the proceedings in movie script format. Interspersed throughout his screenplay are journal writings that provide insight into Steve's life before the murder and his feelings about being held in prison during the trial. "They take away your shoelaces and your belt so you can't kill yourself no matter how bad it is. I guess making you live is part of the punishment."

### *Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie* by David Lubar

Welcome to high school. Forget about getting any sleep or a decent lunch for the next four years. Brace yourself for too much homework, too much attention from dangerous seniors, and no idea at all what your Spanish teacher is talking about. Or your math teacher, for that matter. Join freshman Scott Hudson for a very funny look at a serious time of life.

### *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson

Since the beginning of the school year, high school freshman Melinda has found that it's been getting harder and harder for her to speak out loud: "My throat is always sore, my lips raw.... Every time I try to talk to my parents or a teacher, I sputter or freeze.... It's like I have some kind of spastic laryngitis." What could have caused Melinda to suddenly fall mute? Could it be due to the fact that no one at school is speaking to her because she called the cops and got everyone busted at the seniors' big end-of-summer party? Or maybe it's because her parents' only form of

communication is Post-It notes written on their way out the door to their nine-to-whenever jobs. While Melinda is bothered by these things, deep down she knows the real reason why she's been struck mute...

### *The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte

Alfred's life is going nowhere fast. He's a high-school dropout working at a grocery store. His best friend is drifting behind a haze of drugs and violence, and now some street punks are harassing him for something he didn't do. Feeling powerless and afraid, Alfred gathers up the courage to visit Donatelli's Gym, the neighborhood's boxing club. He wants to be a champion--on the streets and in his own life. Alfred doesn't quite understand when Mr. Donatelli tells him, "It's the climbing that makes the man. Getting to the top is an extra reward." In the end, he learns that a winner isn't necessarily the one standing when the fight is over.

### *The Island of Dr. Moreau* by H.G. Wells

A shipwreck in the South Seas, a palm-tree paradise where a mad doctor conducts vile experiments, animals that become human and then "bestial" in ways they never were before--it's the stuff of high adventure. It's also a parable about Darwinian theory, a social satire in the vein of Jonathan Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*), and a bloody tale of horror. Or, as H. G. Wells himself wrote about this story, "*The Island of Dr. Moreau* is an exercise in youthful blasphemy. Now and then, though I rarely admit it, the universe projects itself towards me in a hideous grimace. It grimaced that time, and I did my best to express my vision of the aimless torture in creation." This colorful tale by the author of [The Time Machine](#), [The Invisible Man](#), and [The War of the Worlds](#) lit a firestorm of controversy at the time of its publication in 1896.

### *Uglies* by Scott Westerfield

Tally Youngblood lives in a futuristic society that acculturates its citizens to believe that they are ugly until age 16 when they'll undergo an operation that will change them into pleasure-seeking "pretties." Anticipating this happy transformation, Tally meets Shay, another female ugly, who shares her enjoyment of hoverboarding and risky pranks. But Shay also disdains the false values and programmed conformity of the society and urges Tally to defect with her to the Smoke, a distant settlement of simple-living conscientious objectors. Tally declines, yet when Shay is found missing by the authorities, Tally is coerced by the cruel Dr. Cable to find her and her compatriots--or remain forever "ugly." Tally's adventuresome spirit helps her locate Shay and the Smoke. It also attracts the eye of David, the aptly named youthful rebel leader to whose attentions Tally warms. However, she knows she is living a lie, for she is a spy who wears an eye-activated locator pendant that threatens to blow the rebels' cover.