**To all future Desert Hills Middle School Honors Language Arts students:**

Welcome to honors eighth and ninth grade. We are excited to have you in our classes

next year. All Desert Hill Middle School Honors students are expected to complete assigned summer reading for their honors language arts classes next year.

Incoming eighth grade honors students are expected to read *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor. This book may be purchased on Amazon.com for $6.00, at Barnes and Noble for $7.99, or at other bookstores for comparable prices.

Incoming ninth grade honors students are expected to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. This book may be purchased on Amazon.com for $4.94, at Barnes and Noble for $4.94, or at other bookstores for comparable prices.

These books will be discussed and tested in the opening days of the new school year. Students will be writing an in-class, open book essay during the first week of school. **Therefore, all honors students will need to purchase the appropriate novel for their grade level since we want students to annotate their books (make notes in them).**

Please **buy the book** early and read throughout the summer. Students who wait to purchase their copies always have a difficult time finding them in the local stores. Bring your annotated copy to the first class of the year for points. The number of points will depend on how well the novel is annotated.

Annotations will help prepare students for the first week’s discussions, essay, other activities, and will encourage active reading skills. Instructions on how to annotate a novel follow this letter. However, it is important to remember the annotation instructions are a guide. It is best to find your own method/system of annotating.

If you have any questions about the summer reading assignments, please contact your honors language arts teacher.

Eighth grade: Mrs. Shepherd ([elise.shepherd@washk12.org](mailto:elise.shepherd@washk12.org))

Ninth grade: Miss Livingston (mary.livingston@washk12.org)

**How to Annotate a Text**

**annotate** –v. 1. to supply with critical or explanatory notes; comment upon in notes: to annotate the works of Shakespeare

2. to make annotations or notes

http://dictionary.reference.com/

**Use this for the assigned summer reading.**

Incoming **eighth** grader honors: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor

Incoming **ninth** grader honors: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

**Active Reading and Annotation Methods**

1. Highlight, circle, or underline key information, including vocabulary you don’t understand, significant

quotes, references to other literary works, or any parts of the text relating to themes, significant

characters, or events.

2. While you read, use your pencil to make notes in the margins about key material. You can use

punctuation marks such as stars, arrows, question marks, check marks, and brackets to mark the text

that you may want to come back to. You should come up with your own unique system to mark what

you think is important or questionable.

3. At the end of each chapter, summarize the main ideas/events in the chapter in one or two sentences.

4. Use the inside front cover of the book to keep a list of important information with page number

references in the book. Some examples of what you could list are important names of characters,

memorable quotes, or key questions you may have about the text.

5. Use the inside back cover to make a list of key vocabulary words and definitions from the text. Choose

words that are unique to the author/story/culture or advanced vocabulary.

\*\*Information on how to annotate a book was taken from <http://www.collegeboard.com>

**Try to do these things:**

1. Use a consistent system. Use the same abbreviations and symbols every time you annotate.

2. Use one color of ink or pencil to make initial markings while reading; then go back with another color

or colors to mark more thoroughly once you finished a larger section and have had time to think about

it. Why? You may change your mind or not read as carefully the first time, and may have other

discoveries about earlier readings and findings.

3. Do underlining, circling, and other annotations as your read.

4. At chapter endings, write the chapter summaries.

5. Be neat and be disciplined about your annotating.

Parts taken from “How to Mark a Book” by Mortimer J. Adler (1902-2001)