

MENLO SCHOOL

2005 Summer Reading List for Eighth Grade

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Before school begins in late August, all in-coming eighth graders should have read the one **required** novel (Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*) and any two of the **recommended** books from the list below. After finishing the one required novel, all students should complete the writing assignment; we will discuss *Speak* as well as the recommended books during the first week of class.

REQUIRED NOVEL: *Speak*, by Laurie Halse Anderson

THE ESSAY QUESTION—choose one:

“She didn’t even bother to find out the truth—what kind of friend is that?” (21)

Friendship—what is it, how do you define it? What sort of friendships do you notice among middle school students? Give examples. Is friendship an absolute (certain characteristics must always be true) or a relative (the characteristics can change with the situation) concept?

Or

“It’s a shame we can’t just admit that we have failed family living, sell the house, split up the money, and get on with our lives.” (70)

Family—what is it, how do you define it? What are the strengths and weakness of “family”? Where do you place “family” on your importance spectrum? Do you want to start a family of your own someday; what are your goals for that family—why?

Note: Two double-spaced, typed pages should give you enough space to tell us as well as to show us your thoughts concerning “friendship” or “family.” The essay is due on the first day of class.

CHOOSE ANY TWO OF THESE TWELVE SUMMER READING NOVELS:

Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, by Dougllass Adams

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

Rules of the Road, by Joan Bauer

Tangerine, by Edward Bloor

Ender’s Game, by Orson Scott Card

Gifted Hands, by Ben Carson

Murder on the Orient Express, by Agatha Christie

Whirligig, by Paul Fleischman

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, by Mark Haddon

Into Thin Air, by Jon Krakauer

The Usual Rules, by Joyce Maynard

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, by Betty Smith

Note: If you would like a critical review or a synopsis of these books, try the American Library Association’s web site. The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) and *Booklist* divisions of the web site are especially useful.