

**East Hamilton Middle School  
Summer Reading for Grade 8**

**Dear Students and Parents,**

We believe reading is a powerful tool that makes the world a better place. It has been proven to improve writing, increase empathy, expand vocabulary, boost students' reading achievement, and build background knowledge. We also believe there is no better time for students to engage in independent reading – to get lost in a book – than during summer break!

Therefore, East Hamilton has constructed a summer reading program for your incoming 8th grade student. There will be **one required book**, a historical fiction novel called *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen. This novel corresponds with one of the 8th grade English units your student will participate in next school year. Students should complete the required reading by ***Friday, August 18***.

About the Novel (from the author): This book is about a Jewish teenager who hated the idea of having to remember so much Jewish history and ritual. At a family seder, she opens the door to Elijah and finds herself whirled back in time to a Polish Jewish shtetl in the 1940s. There, though she alone understands what will happen to the villagers, she is taken with them to a concentration camp. This is a story of the quiet heroism in the camps and why we must bear witness to history.

We believe students should have authentic opportunities to share their summer reading experiences with teachers and classmates when they return to school in August. Providing ways for students to engage with others around their summer reading will help establish a vibrant reading culture in our schools and build community as we kick off the new school year.

**Therefore, students will be creating and sharing a book review to go along with the novel.**

This review will be due ***August 18*** (the Friday of the first full week back to school). The book review for students to complete can be found on the back of this letter.

In summary, students need to read *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen over the summer and complete the book review on the back of this letter. Students will complete an assessment over the reading when they return to school in August.

We look forward to the start of the school year and partnering with you to help your child succeed. For questions, please contact Mark Pace ([pace\\_mark@hcde.org](mailto:pace_mark@hcde.org)), 8th grade English language arts.

**Sincerely,**

Mark Pace, Missy Smith, and Paige Phillips  
8th Grade English Language Arts