

Upper Perkiomen Middle School

Summer ELA (English Language Arts)

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Reading is a lifelong skill, and research shows that adult readers establish their reading habits most strongly during their middle school years. Additionally, any progress made during the regular school year is maintained when students read over the summer. With this philosophy in mind, we would like to share with you the requirements for summer reading for students who will enter the 2017-2018 school year as 8th graders.

All students entering 8th grade need to complete two assignments over the summer. The first assignment is reading a novel and creating a Sticky Note Book Report and the second assignment is a creative writing piece. Follow the directions below, utilizing this document and the links found in this document to complete the following by the first day of school!

Assignment 1 (Sticky Note Book Report):

1. Select a novel from the following options. **DO NOT READ A NOVEL YOU HAVE ALREADY READ.** If you have already read one of these novels, you may select another (the next) novel in the series. For example, if you have already read *The Hunger Games*, you may read *Catching Fire* even though it isn't specifically written on the list below. Our goal is for you to find a series that you like and will continue to read or to find an author you enjoy so you'll read other novels by him/her.

** Please note that, if your child is currently in the Special Education program or PEG program, additional information MAY be sent home explaining any possible modified summer reading requirements for his/her placement.

**** Parents/Guardians**** Although the following novels are intended for young adults, some include material/topics which you may not find suitable for your child. We encourage you to preview and/or read the novel beforehand. If you are not comfortable with any of the content, please select a different novel.

Title	Author	Description
<i>Alex Rider: Stormbreaker</i> (SERIES)	Anthony Horowitz	Alex Rider's world is turned upside down when he discovers that his uncle and

		<p>guardian has been murdered. The 14-year-old makes one discovery after another until he is sucked into his uncle's undercover world. The Special Operations Division of M16, his uncle's real employer, blackmails the teen into serving England. Alex's mission is to complete his uncle's last assignment.</p>
<p><i>Chronicles of Vladimir Tod: Eighth Grade Bites</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>Heather Brewer</p>	<p>Thirteen-year-old half-vampire Vladimir Tod struggles to navigate the ups and downs of eighth grade while keeping his untested powers and impulses under control. Needless to say, his life is chaotic. His parents were mysteriously murdered, and now someone seems to be stalking him.</p>
<p><i>Dead is the New Black</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>Marlene Perez</p>	<p>When the girl-to-be, cheerleader Samantha Devereaux, begins the school year with a completely new look, Daisy Giordano gets suspicious. The fact that Samantha appears dead doesn't seem to bother anyone, and before long looking dead becomes the rage. Being dead takes on a whole new meaning when a girl is mysteriously attacked and turns up in the morgue. Daisy and her psychic sisters get to work investigating and are determined to get to the bottom of things.</p>
<p><i>Hunger Games</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>Suzanne Collins</p>	<p>Sixteen-year-old Katniss poaches food for her widowed mother and little sister from the forest outside of District 12, the poorest of the dozen districts constituting Panem, the North American dystopic state that has replaced the U.S. Her hunting and tracking skills serve her well when she is then cast into the nation's annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death where contestants must battle harsh terrain, artificially concocted weather conditions, and two teenaged contestants from each of Panem's districts.</p>

<p><i>Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>James Patterson</p>	<p>After the mutant Erasers abduct the youngest member of their group, Max Ride and the other “bird-kids” (human-avian genetic hybrids) take off in pursuit and find themselves struggling to understand their own origins and purpose.</p>
<p><i>Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>Rick Riordon</p>	<p>Percy Jackson learns that old Greek myths are true and not just stories. In fact, he learns that he is the son of a mortal woman and Poseidon, god of the sea. Twelve-year-old Percy is sent to a summer camp for demigods like himself, and joins his new friends on a quest to prevent a war between the gods.</p>
<p><i>Divergent</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>Veronica Roth</p>	<p>In a future Chicago, 16-year-old Beatrice must choose one faction among five, a decision made more difficult when she discovers that she does not fit into any one group.</p>
<p><i>The Maze Runner</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>James Dashner</p>	<p>Sixteen-year-old Thomas wakes up with no memory in the middle of a maze and realizes he must work with the community in which he finds himself if he is to escape.</p>
<p>1. <i>The Fault in Our Stars</i> 2. <i>An Abundance of Katherines</i> 3. <i>Looking for Alaska</i> 4. <i>Let it Snow</i> 5. <i>Paper Towns</i> (SELECTED NOVELS)</p>	<p>John Green</p>	<p>John Green is the New York Times bestselling author of <i>Looking for Alaska</i>, <i>An Abundance of Katherines</i>, <i>Paper Towns</i>, and <i>The Fault in Our Stars</i>. He was 2006 recipient of the Michael L. Printz Award, a 2009 Edgar Award winner, and has twice been a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. Green’s books have been published in more than a dozen languages.</p>
<p>1. <i>Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie</i> 2. <i>After Ever After</i> 3. <i>Notes from the Midnight Driver</i></p>	<p>Jordan Sonnenblick</p>	<p>Jordan Sonnenblick always wanted to be a writer, so one day in 2003 he started the book that became <i>Drums, Girls & Dangerous Pie</i>. It was published in 2005 to great</p>

<p>5. <i>Curveball: The Year I Lost My Grip</i> 6. <i>Zen and the Art of Faking It</i> (SELECTED NOVELS)</p>		<p>acclaim, and was named to several Best of 2005 lists. Its sequel, <i>After Ever After</i>, was published in 2010 to many accolades. In addition, Jordan also wrote the the critically acclaimed teen novels <i>Notes from the Midnight Driver</i> and <i>Zen and the Art of Faking It</i>.</p>
<p><i>The Legend Trilogy</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>Marie Lu</p>	<p>The complete collection of Marie Lu's bestselling Legend trilogy: <i>Legend</i>, <i>Prodigy</i>, and <i>Champion</i>. What was once the western United States is now home to the Republic, a nation perpetually at war with its neighbors. Born into an elite family in one of the Republic's wealthiest districts, fifteen-year-old June is a prodigy being groomed for success in the Republic's highest military circles. Born into the slums, fifteen-year-old Day is the country's most wanted criminal. But his motives may not be as malicious as they seem.</p>
<p><i>The 5th Wave</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>Rick Yancey</p>	<p>The #1 <i>New York Times</i> Bestseller as well as a winner of many other awards, <i>The 5th Wave</i> (first novel of the series) takes place after the 1st wave when only darkness remains. After the 2nd, only the lucky escape. After the 3rd, only the unlucky survive. After the 4th wave, only one rule applies: trust no one. Now, it's the dawn of the 5th wave, and on a lonely stretch of highway, Cassie runs from Them. The beings who only look human, who roam the countryside killing anyone they see. To stay alone is to stay alive, Cassie believes, until she meets Evan Walker. Evan Walker may be Cassie's only hope for rescuing her brother--or even saving herself.</p>
<p><i>The City of Ember</i> (SERIES)</p>	<p>Jeanne DuPrau</p>	<p>With more than 3.5 million copies sold, the <i>City of Ember</i> books are modern-day classics. Lina and Doon's heart-pounding journey to save their people has captivated readers</p>

		around the world. The city of Ember was built as a last refuge for the human race. But now with terrifying blackouts sweeping through the streets, Lina and Doon know it's only a matter of time before the lights go out and never come back on again.
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2. As you read, complete a [Sticky Note Book Report](#) (below) about the novel. You will submit this assignment on the first day of school.
3. Within the first two weeks of school, we will discuss summer reading and take the AR Test based on the novel of your choice. **PLEASE DO NOT TAKE THE TEST BEFORE THE SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS!**
4. The score of the AR Test (**40 points**) and the Sticky Note Book Report (**50 points**) will count for the first trimester.

Assignment 2 (Creative Writing):

Since ELA encompasses both reading and writing, we feel it's important to require students do a bit of writing as well as reading. This assignment will help your teachers determine who you are as a writer and will provide an example to use as discuss the writing process and writing traits.

1. Read the attached [Story Starters](#) below.
2. Select one (1) story starter that intrigues you and you feel you can conclude. When considering plot structure, the story starters develop the exposition and rising action. It is now your job to write the climax, falling action, and resolution.

Plot Structure Components

Climax: The turning point. The most intense moment (either mentally or in action).

Rising Action: the series of conflicts and crisis in the story that lead to the climax.

Falling Action: all of the action which follows the Climax.

Exposition: The start of the story. The way things are before the action starts.

Resolution: The conclusion, the tying together of all of the threads.

3. Utilize your writing process to develop a quality essay. Although everyone's writing process differs, you should (at least) brainstorm, prewrite (create an organizer), create a rough copy, edit and revise, and then create a final copy. Use the table below to help guide you. This will be the rubric used to assess you.

Writing Trait	Description	Points
<i>Focus</i>	Create a feasible ending to one of the story starters. Obviously this essay requires you to be creative. However, your conclusion to the story must be feasible/reasonable.	1-4
<i>Content</i>	<u>You have at least 400 words</u> , and you provide a detailed and thorough explanation of the outcome. Your story doesn't leave any questions unanswered (unless purposely written to do so) and the reader isn't left wondering what happened or how something happened.	1-4
<i>Organization</i>	Although there is not a required number of paragraphs, you should obviously break up your paper into paragraphs. Each paragraph should contain one idea and examples explaining that idea. <u>DO NOT WRITE ONE BIG PARAGRAPH!</u>	1-4

<i>Style</i>	The writing in your essay should be lively. Try to describe ideas and events in new and different ways. Use some “big” vocabulary words (PROPERLY) and vary your sentence structure. Get the basic story down, get it organized, and in your final editing process, work on word choice.	1-4
<i>Conventions</i>	You have complete sentences. You have proper punctuation and proper spelling. It actually appears that you took the time to edit and revise this essay, and I am not finding silly/obvious mistakes.	1-4
		_____/20
Total: <u>YOUR SCORE</u>/20 x 2 = 40 total points		

4. Please revise your creative piece to ensure there are no mistakes - have a parent or a friend edit it. All writing needs editing and revision before it can truly be considered a “final copy.”

5. You may use Google Docs to write this essay. On the first day of school, you will share this document with your teacher.

**If you do not have access to a computer/Chromebook over the summer, you may handwrite this essay and submit it on the first day of school.

6. The score of the creative writing piece will count for the first trimester. **(40 points)**

Assignment 1: Sticky-Note Book Report

While reading the novel you selected from the list provided, you will note your metacognition (thinking) on sticky notes, thus creating a Sticky-Note Book Report **due on the first day of school.**

This is a departure from traditional book summary evaluation. This technique will help you to study for your other courses and the AR test that you will take. The purpose is

to record your immediate thoughts and responses in order to improve reading focus, comprehension, and involvement in the book.

Supplies needed:

1. The novel you selected from the list provided.
2. A pack of standard size sticky notes (any color; no designs because they make it difficult to read).
3. A **PEN** (blue or black ink only). Please do not use a pencil, for it will smudge!
4. Several pieces of unlined 8 ½ x 11 paper (any color).

Procedure:

1. Write 21 sticky notes minimum (It is suggested you write more).
2. React to the ENTIRE book (beginning, middle, and end).
3. Use all SEVEN of the strategies detailed on the other side of this paper.
4. Label your post-its with the **DATE**, the **page number**, and the type of reading strategy that you are using (**E, P, CC, TS, TT, TW, I**).
5. There must be varied metacognition, at least THREE of each type.
6. When you have finished reading the book, create a title page (featuring the title and author) and place all sticky notes in order, by chapter, on 8 ½ x 11 paper. Label each chapter clearly at the top of a piece of paper.

Grading:

Total project is worth 50 points.

*Two points for each sticky note (21 x 2) = 42 points with additional 8 points for your arrangement of notes labeled on chapter pages.

Sticky Notes Strategies for Reading Comprehension

Put sticky notes directly in the book as you are reading until you are finished with it.

The following abbreviations (along with the date and page number) should be at the top of every sticky note. USE THREE OF EACH STRATEGY (that's 21)--that's the MINIMUM!

Evaluation (E) – Write down what just happened AND then include your emotional response or judgement about this event. FOCUS ON IMPORTANT EVENTS!

Prediction (P) – Guess what will happen next in the story AND give evidence to support your prediction.

Clarifying Confusion (CC) – Write down what you are wondering and/or confused about. Show an attempt to include the clarification to your confusion, especially if it is a vocabulary-level question.

Text-to-self Connection (TS) – Compare a character or an event to yourself.

Text-to-text Connection (TT) – Compare a character or an event to another text.

Text-to-world Connection (TW) – Compare a character or an event to what is going on in the world (such as a current event).

Inference (I) – Based on the author’s writing, what can be concluded, suggested, or implied; draw a conclusion based on reasoning, read between the lines.

Assignment 2: Creative Writing

Remember, you are selecting one of the following story starters and finishing the story. Read through the different stories provided to pick your favorite!

Up, Up, and Away

Makenna walked across the soccer field toward the park swings, digging a pack of bubble gum out of her pocket. I’ll bet I can blow a REALLY big bubble if I chew the whole pack at once, she thought. A few minutes later she crammed the last piece into her mouth. As soon as the gum was soft enough, she positioned it just right and started to blow. One breath: It was as big as an apple. Two breaths: It was nearly as big as her head. Three breaths: Wow! A new personal record! She kept going. Four breaths. Five. Six! Just then, a gust of wind blew through the park and tugged at her bubble. Makenna held on. She inhaled and blew again. It was enormous! Another stronger gust of wind

took hold of it and pulled. Makenna clamped her lips on the gum. No way! I won't give up on this bubble!

The wind pulled harder, lifting Makenna off her feet. She held on with her teeth as she swiftly rose up and up and up. Looking down, she saw the swing set, then the whole playing field next to it. How could she call for help with her teeth clenched on the bubble gum? All she could manage was a pathetic sound through her nose, "NNNNNNNNN!"

And then . . .

Push the Button

"How much longer, Dad?" asked Ryan from the back seat of the van. "Just around the next corner and over the next hill," Dad replied with a tired voice. "That's what you said last time, and the time before that," Stacie protested from the seat beside Ryan. It was summer, and that meant a long drive to see Grandma and Grandpa. Boring, boring, boring. Ryan and Stacie had already complained, argued, and played a few rounds of the alphabet game and twenty questions.

As they sat and tried to think of what to do next, Stacie said, "Ryan, what's that button next to your seat? I don't have one like it next to mine." "A button? I don't have a button." He looked down at a round red button just below the armrest next to his seat. "Oh, that." In large white letters was the word "PUSH." "How come I don't have one?" asked Stacie, looking around her seat. "I dunno." Ryan shrugged. They both stared at it. "Are you gonna push it?" Stacie looked at Ryan with wide eyes. "You better not." Ryan looked at his sister, then down at the button. After a quick check to make sure Mom and Dad weren't looking, he reached his finger toward the red button. He pushed.

And then . . .

Voices in My Root Beer

The pizza parlor buzzed with the happy voices of Rachael's soccer team. They had won the last game of the season and were celebrating with a pizza party. Rachael and her teammates crowded into a booth, happily discussing their winning plays. "I got drinks! Who wants root beer?" her coach asked, holding a pitcher in each hand. "Right here! I do!" Rachael waved her arm. To her, there was absolutely no better drink in the world than root beer! Rachael loved the foam, the fizz, the spicy sweetness!

She grabbed a pitcher and began filling her glass. The foam rose up immediately, and she waited for it to go down before topping it off. She leaned over to smell the lovely root beer smell. The bubbles popped and tickled her nose. But they didn't make a bubble-popping sound. She bent her ear next to the foam. What was she hearing? She closed her eyes and concentrated on the sound. Voices. She heard voices coming from the tiny bubbles! Yes, and she heard words, a little louder now. What were they saying? They were just loud enough to understand.

And then . . .

Gone Camping

Brian lugged his sleeping bag and suitcase to the car, which was now stuffed to the roof with everything a family could possibly need for a weekend camping trip. He and his sister squeezed themselves into the back seat. Luckily, the drive was only an hour. When they arrived at the entrance to the campground, the ranger at the gate took their money and pointed them toward the campsite. Just before they drove off he said, "By the way, we've heard reports of a strange animal around these parts. We don't quite know what it is, but I recommend keeping your children close after dark."

Brian wasn't sure what that meant, but he didn't like the sound of it. After helping his family set up, Brian was ready to go off exploring. There was still plenty of daylight left, so that "strange animal" wouldn't be bothering him, right? "I'm going down to the creek, Mom," he called to his mother. "I don't know about that, hon," his mom said. "You heard the park ranger." "Oh Mom, I'll be fine. It's not far, and I'll stay on the path." "All right, but be back in an hour," his mom relented. Brian took off down the path into the forest. The woods had great trees to climb and the nearby creek had a cool wading spot.

Later, on his way back up the trail to camp, he heard a rustling in the bushes. He froze, remembering the warning from the park ranger. He was about to make a run for it, but he stopped. Just one little peek wouldn't hurt, would it? Quietly, he tiptoed over to the spot where he saw the leaves quivering. Aw, it can't be very big, he thought. He crouched and reached out to spread the branches apart. Squinting into the center of the underbrush, he found himself face to face with the creature. "You're not going to hurt me, are you?" it asked.

And then . . .

AH-CHOO

Nico woke up and groaned. His head hurt, his throat was scratchy, and only one nostril worked. No! he thought. I don't want to be sick! But wait, no school! He rolled out of bed and took two steps toward the bathroom. A tickle started in his nose. He felt the first sneeze of the day coming on. AH-CHOO! Yuck. That didn't feel good. He opened his eyes to see he was already standing in the bathroom. He had just enough time to grab a tissue before the next sneeze struck. AH-CHOO! He took a step back and bumped into the kitchen counter. What? How did I get here? He looked around the room in bewilderment. Another tickle grew in his nose. AH-CHOO! Nico sneezed the biggest sneeze yet.

Rain fell on his head as he gaped at his own backyard. These sneezes are blowing me around the house, or transporting me, or something. Oh no, here comes another one! He tried to keep his eyes open this time. AH-CHOO! Oh yeah, my teacher told me that keeping your eyes open when you sneeze is impossible. Nico hugged his pajamas closer when he found himself down the street in front of his neighbor's house. He shivered and started running for home. I've got to get home before I sneeze again!

Crashing through the front door, he charged to his room. He had tugged on a shirt and was just pulling on his pants when the tickle started growing. "Shoes! I need shoes!" he yelled. AH-CHOO!

And then . . .

Family Outing

Christopher scuffed his feet along the trail as he followed his parents, three brothers, and sister through the woods. I'm thirsty, my feet hurt, and I'm sure a million mosquitoes have bitten me by now, he thought as he scratched at his elbow. "Will you guys slow down? Not everyone is feeling so energetic on this hike, you know." He scowled as his mom just turned and smiled at him. As his family's voices faded around a curve, he sat on a stump beside the path. Well, I'm taking a rest even if they aren't.

In the sudden quiet he became aware of odd sounds around him. Faint music, laughter, the clinking of glasses, and happy voices shouting to each other. Sounds like a party, he thought. But how can there be a party in this wilderness? Strangely, the noises seemed to originate in a clump of bushes just off the path. He stepped closer, quietly, hoping not to be seen spying. It was darker under the canopy of leaves, and what caught his eye was a beam of light shining straight out of a hole in the ground at the base of a tree. It was only as big as a rabbit hole, but the party noises were definitely coming from there. The music sounded like tiny fiddles, guitars, and horns. Christopher tiptoed up to the hole and snap! He stepped on a dry twig. The noises ceased. Whispers took their place. Christopher crouched silently and waited.

And then . . .

Swish

Kai grabbed his basketball from the floor of his closet and made his way out to the new hoop in the driveway. He dribbled a little to loosen up, then took his first shot. The ball bounced off the rim and into the bushes. Whatever, he thought. I'm still warming up. He circled the driveway, and charged the hoop, trying for a layup. Drat!

Kai took a quick look up and down the street to make sure no neighborhood kids were watching him miss such easy shots. He bounced the ball three times, focused on the hoop, set his feet, and took the shot. The ball arced into the air and swished into the net. Then silence. There was no bounce after the ball passed through the hoop. There was no ball. It was gone. Kai looked around him. How could he have missed it? He backed up and looked up on the roof. No ball. How could the ball disappear when it just went through the net? On impulse, Kai picked up a rock and tossed it into the hoop. No rock came out the bottom. It vanished. Kai shivered.

Okay, I must be going crazy. What is going on here? He stood there for a moment, then opened the garage door and dragged out the ladder, unfolding it next to the hoop. He slowly climbed the rungs. When he reached the top, he looked down into the basket.

And then . . .

Take a Deep Breath

The ocean waves pounded the sand and slithered up to Cameryn's feet. She bounded into the surf, each leap bringing the water deeper, to her knees, to her thighs, to her hips. Finally another breaker knocked her off her feet. She fell, laughing, and enjoyed the coolness of the water on her hot skin. Just as her feet found the sand again another wave crashed on her head and hammered her below the surface. She barely had time to grab a breath before the water closed over her. She tumbled and rolled beneath the waves. Which way was up? She was running out of air.

Finally, she couldn't hold her breath any longer, and her lungs sucked in the seawater. But she didn't choke. She didn't feel faint. Her head cleared, and she opened her eyes. She saw the sand beneath her, and the legs of other swimmers kicking below the surface. She exhaled the water from her lungs, and automatically sucked in another breath. It didn't hurt. In fact, she felt fine, perfectly fine. I'm breathing underwater! This is so weird! She swam a little farther out, past the waves that were breaking above her, to where the water was calm and the sea floor dropped away. Cameryn could see schools of fish, rock formations, even what looked like a long buried object sticking out of the sand. I could stay down here for hours, she thought, as she spotted something huge in the distance.

And then . . .

Going Up

Daniel wasn't really thrilled about the new apartment building his family had moved into. The only cool thing about it was the elevator. His old building didn't have one, but now they lived on the fourth floor, so he got to ride it every day. Today he was going home and was about to turn right to his hall elevator when he decided to mix things up and turn left instead. There was an elevator for this hall, too, so why not give it a try?

He pushed the up arrow and stepped in. Good! No one else going up. He reached for button number four but was suddenly confused by the panel. There were more than four numbers. In fact, the numbers went all the way to 36! How can there be thirty-six numbers? There aren't thirty-six floors. Maybe it's a spare-parts elevator, and only the first four buttons work. But since he was in a mix-it-up mood, he decided to push a spare-part number. Let's try number 29. The number lit up, the doors closed, and the elevator started to rise.

The display panel above the door read "2," then "3," then "4," and kept going. Daniel's heart started to pound. 15, 16, 17. His hands started to sweat. How do I get out of here? 22, 23, 24. The elevator slowed, then stopped when the panel read "29." The doors dinged and slid open. "Hello, Daniel. Welcome to floor number 29."

And then . . .

Something Fishy

The first thing Ava said when she arrived at her grandfather's summer lake house was, "Grandpa! Can I go swimming? I can really swim now. Can I? Will you come watch me?" "Go swimming, huh? Well, I don't know," Grandpa responded hesitantly. "What? Grandpa! I've really been looking forward to it!" Ava pleaded. "Pleeease?" He coughed and looked uncomfortable. "Ava, that lake is . . . it might . . . I guess if I'm right there, but just tell me if you think . . . oh never mind! Sure, I'll come and watch you."

Next thing, Ava was galloping into the water while Grandpa sat in a lawn chair sipping a cold drink. "Grandpa! Watch this!" She did a back somersault, and Grandpa smiled encouragingly. Then Ava dove deep, but instead of cool water down below, she felt warm water. That's strange. Coming up, she took a deep breath, and dove again. The water was definitely warm, almost like bath water, and it felt tingly on her skin. What's going on? As soon as she surfaced, she called out, "Grandpa! That was really strange. Just now when I dove down, the water was warm and made my skin feel all funny." Grandpa sat straight up. "It did? Are you all right? You'd better come out of there. Did you see anything?" "See anything? No. What do you mean?" "Oh, good. I mean, let's head back to the house for lunch."

As they walked back to the house, Grandpa kept looking at Ava and fussing over her, wrapping her towel more closely around her shoulders, smoothing her hair, patting her back. "You feel OK?" he asked. "Yeah, why?" Grandpa said nothing. While Grandpa fixed sandwiches, Ava showered to try to wash off that tingly feeling that wouldn't go away. Standing in the spray, she scrubbed her arms with the bar of soap. Her skin felt scratchy. Something wasn't right. She looked down at her arms and was horrified to see what looked like scales.

And then . . .

On. Off. On. Off.

Carlos thought the present his brother gave him was okay, but that was the problem. It was just okay. It was a flashlight. What's so great about a flashlight? I guess I can say it's mine and keep it in my room. He'd wrap duct tape around the handle and put his name on it. That night in bed, he got out his birthday present. How lame. Why didn't he get me that pellet gun we talked about? He switched it on and shone it at his closet. He could see his clothes hanging inside. Oops, I forgot to shut my closet door. I hate that. He got up to push the door closed, but was surprised to find it already shut tight.

Confused, he climbed back in bed. He aimed his flashlight at the ceiling and switched it on again. He saw cobwebs and beams of wood that made the roof of the house. Carlos shut the flashlight off. There was his ceiling, with glow-in-the-dark stars stuck to it. He switched it on again. Cobwebs, beams of wood, the roof. Off. Ceiling, stars. On. Cobwebs, beams, roof. Off. Ceiling, stars. I get it. I can see through things. He pointed it at the outside wall of his bedroom. There was the backyard, the swing set, the maple tree. Off. His wall, and a poster of Jump Shot Johnson. A sneaky grin crossed

Carlos's face. He climbed out of bed, and tiptoed out his bedroom door, flashlight in hand.

And then . . .

Work Cited

Klepinger, Teresa. *Cliffhanger Writing Prompts*. Scholastic Teaching Resources. 11 July 2001. Print.