

Dear Families,

This semester the gifted cluster class will study William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, a Dystopian novel. Dystopian literature is designed to explore social studies concepts, particularly what happens when governments have too much control, or when people are left to govern themselves. *Lord of the Flies* is a critically acclaimed dystopian novel depicting the events that happen when a group of young boys from Britain are stranded on an island during a war. The novel is an important modern literary masterpiece and it earned Golding the Nobel Prize in 1983.

The Dystopian novel explores the ideas of human nature, evil, and what happens when people are left to govern themselves unsupervised. We will be discussing issues of law, upbringing, and development of society. Students will be examining the qualities that make a strong leader in a society, and what factors are used in determining the quality of leadership. We will also be examining psychology and sociology to look at why humans/ character choose the actions they do. Due to the subject matter, the book does contain some violent scenes and instances of bullying.

This book has been selected off an approved reading list from Cumberland County's gifted program. The discussions from this book make it an excellent educational opportunity for students by examining character development, and symbolic meanings in the setting of the story.

Students by the end of the unit study should develop the following skills:

- Analytical and interpretive skills in literature
- Creative, expository, and persuasive writing skills
- Listening/oral communication skills through discussion
- Reasoning skills

I believe this novel is worthwhile for these skills and lessons. However, I can offer an **alternative selection as a directed study** to students who have honest objections, before starting the novel. Various assignments will be given, so several grades will depend upon the reading of this novel. The students who choose an alternate will be given tests, writing assignments, and projects as well, but they will not have the benefit of class discussion.

Students will have access to a classroom set of this novel, but it is encouraged that students purchase their own personal copy. This year we have been practicing annotation, and it would benefit your child to be able to mark in their personal copy of their book. This skill of marking information as we read is one that will help them on standardized test. **Students will also have some chapters they will need to read outside of class.** There is PDF available online, so it will not be necessary to have a novel, but it would be helpful. We will be reading the book together in class. The students will be responsible for activities as we read that will be placed in their **Interactive Notebooks**. The students will do some cross curricular activities with Mrs. Ballew's class. Mrs. Ballew and I are very excited to collaborate with each other to enrich the learning experience.

Please sign and return to this note so that I will know that you are aware of this assignment. If you request the alternative assignment, please make that notation below.

Thank you,  
Jessica Miller

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I have read the letter and have discussed with my child the importance of maturity in reading and discussing the novel, *Lord of the Flies*, in the classroom.

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_