

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS HONORS**  
**Cocopah Middle School Sixth Grade Summer Reading Assignment**  
**Due on the first day of school**

**LETTER ABOUT LITERATURE**

Choose one of the following novels for your assignment:

1. *Ask Me No Questions*, by Marina Budhos (multicultural selection)
2. *Star Girl*, by Jerry Spinelli
3. *The Perfect Shot*, by Elaine Marie Alphin
4. *Payback Time*, by Carl Deuker

After reading your summer novel, write a one-page friendly letter about your book to a fellow student. You will read this letter to another classmate during the first few days of school. Your letter should follow standard friendly letter formatting (see attached directions and sample).

**YOUR LETTER MUST INCLUDE:**

- The book title and author (please either underline - if hand-written - or italicize the title)
- A brief explanation about what the book was about
- A description of the main character and **how he or she changed**
- Explain why you would or would not recommend the book to your peers (with some specific references to the text)
- Your questions about the book: explain one of your questions or something you would like to know more about.

**Honors Students and Students Seeking a Challenge:**

While reading your novel, find five words that you are not familiar with. Research these words in a dictionary, and incorporate them into your friendly letter. You may need to research examples of these words in sentences in order to truly learn how to use them correctly. Please highlight them in your letter so you can share them with your classmates.

Below are some strategies to follow before, during, and after reading your book. These are some of the strategies you will be learning to use while in sixth grade, and by practicing them, you will become a stronger reader.

**Before reading your book, ask yourself:**

What can I predict about the book from the front and back cover?

What questions do I have about the book?

**While reading, ask yourself:**

What do I think is going to happen next in the book? Why?

Can I relate any part of this book to an event in my life?

What questions do I now have about this book?

What do I notice about the author's style of writing?

**After reading, ask:**

How accurate were my predictions about the text?

In what ways can I relate the book to my own life?

What questions do I have about an event or character in the book?

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### **Directions for Writing a Friendly Letter**

In a friendly letter format, your address, date, the closing, signature, and printed name are all indented to the right half of the page (how far you indent is up to you as long as the heading and closing are lined up). Also, the first line of each paragraph is indented.

**1 Your Address**

All that is needed is your street address on the first line and the city, state and zip on the second line. You may use Cocopah's address if you do not want to use your home address.

**2 Date**

Put the date on which the letter was written. Skip a line between the date and the salutation.

**3 Salutation**

Because you do not know the name of the student who will hear your letter, you may write Dear Student in your salutation. Note: There is a comma after the end of the salutation in a friendly letter.

**4 Body**

The body is where you write the content of the letter. Refer to the boxed section on the first page to see what needs to be included in the body of your letter. Skip two lines between the end of the body and the closing.

**5 Closing**

The closing usually ends with Sincerely, Sincerely yours, Yours truly, and so on. Note that there is a comma after the end of the closing and only the first word in the closing is capitalized.

**6 Signature**

Your signature will go in this section, usually signed in black or blue ink with a pen. Skip a line after your signature and the P.S.

**7 P.S. (optional)**

If you want to add anything additional to the letter, you write a P.S. (post script) and the message after that.

Please read this sample friendly letter about a summer novel. You may refer to it for ideas while writing your own letter. (Note: The “honors/challenge” extension is not included.)

1 6615 E. Cholla Street  
Scottsdale, AZ 85254

2 May 4, 2014

3 Dear Students,

Over the summer, we read the novel, *A Wrinkle in Time*, by Madeleine L’Engle. This science fiction book told the story of Meg Murry, a high-school-aged girl who is transported on an adventure through time and space with her younger brother Charles Wallace and her friend Calvin O’Keefe to rescue her father, a scientist, from the evil forces that hold him prisoner on the planet, Camazotz.

4 At the beginning of the book, Meg is an insecure, awkward girl who does not have a high opinion of herself because she feels unattractive and does not fit in. She changes by learning to believe in herself. This occurred when she willed herself to go back to the planet Camazotz to rescue her brother Charles Wallace even though he was being held by a dangerous, evil force referred to as “It.”

We would recommend this book to our students because it tells a suspenseful and unpredictable story and it teaches the theme that love is more powerful than hate. Meg and her partners encounter many unusual creatures during their search for Meg’s father - some of them very dangerous. The story was unpredictable because Meg’s father was not the savior the children were hoping for. Meg, an unlikely heroine due to her insecurities, showed her strength at the end and used her love for her brother to conquer the evil antagonist, “It,” a brain-like creature.

One question we had at the end of the story has to do with “It.” Did this creature die at the end? Even though the power of Meg’s love freed Charles from It’s hypnotic hold, the reader never actually finds out its fate.

We are hoping our students will find their summer novels as enjoyable as we found *A Wrinkle in Time*!

5 Sincerely yours,

6 Your Sixth Grade English Language Arts  
Teachers

7 P.S. We are looking forward to a wonderful year with all of you!