

Fleming Middle School, English Language Arts, Q3

Nicholas Kemper • 5 days ago • Thursday, Jan 26 at 7:45 AM • **6th Language Arts - P1-Kemper, 6th Language Arts - P2-Kemper, 6th Language Arts - P3-Kemper, 6th Language Arts - P5-Kemper, 6th Language Arts - P6-Kemper, 6th Language Arts - P7-Kemper**

Hello 6th-grade parents,

Welcome to Quarter 3! Following will be an overview of the new quarter and expectations:

GIVER UNIT:

As a class, we read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry (author of *Number the Stars*). *The Giver* has a fifth-grade reading level, but the thematic concepts are far more lasting and attainable for middle school students. As a quick explanation of this novel, shmoop.com will be referenced as it provides an eloquent overview, “*The Giver* tells the story of a young boy named Jonas living in a highly controlled community some time in the future. The novel fits into a larger genre of cautionary tales called ‘dystopian literature.’ A utopia is a society in which everything is perfect, so a dystopia is the opposite: everything has gone wrong. The novel explores Jonas’s encounter with memories of ‘the past,’ a time much like ours, in which people still had the freedom of choice.”

To elaborate more on “dystopian literature,” it is a genre that explores a world or society that has made drastic changes to find a “perfect” or “utopian” lifestyle, but amongst all the “positive” changes many liberties and rights have been taken away. Often times that “perfect” world that is sought after is actually a horrible world of secrets, suspicion, and suspense. Consider *The Giver* as one of the “founders” of the dystopian genre. From there many popular novels and series have followed, which young adults are avidly reading: *The Hunger Games*; *Mazer Runner*; *Uglies*, *Pretties*, *Specials*, and *Extras*; *Divergent*; *Inhuman*; *Matched*; *Cinder*; *Going Green*; *The Host*; and *The 5th Wave*.

What is amazing about this particular novel, is the discussion of why we are different and what makes us our own individuals. *The Giver* shows a society of “sameness”: same clothes, same behavior, same feelings, same memories. From the wonderful and authentic discussions, we investigate why we want differences to exist and how choice builds the individual. These concepts are very fitting for the middle school level, and many morals can be gained from the reading and subsequent conversations.

While reading this novel we will be learning about the language arts concepts of plot, character conflict, theme, setting, compare and contrast, and essay writing. Using this Giver novel and Unit Handbook (which students have already received), it is essential students stay on top of their reading requirements (assigned chapters designated in the Timeline in the Unit Handbook). Students will be required to complete a note-taker per chapter (the model of note-takers is located in the handbook as well) and have designated note-takers complete when we have Note Taker Checks (dates located in Timeline). This timeline is where specific concepts are to be discussed and when assignments are due. It is critical reading does not fall too far behind schedule. I also discourage reading too far ahead, I would prefer one or two chapters max for advanced reading.

I do have an alternate assignment in place of reading *The Giver* if you have any concerns about this unit. If this is something you would be interested in, please, let me know via email.

PROFICIENCIES:

Following are the three proficiencies students will need to pass to guarantee a passing grade this quarter:

Vocab - Students have received a new vocab packet. Quizzes and review test dates can be found on this handout or on Canvas under Academic Vocab. Students will need to pass the Review Test as this is a proficiency.

AR - AR will function a little differently this quarter. Students will be required to only read TWO AR books: 1 being *The Giver*, and 1 being a chapter book. As we are reading a class novel, students will be expected to read this novel and pass the AR test on it. Students will then be expected to read one additional AR chapter book in their reading range. If students pass both tests, then they will receive a 100% for their AR Goal.

Elements of Story Test - This quarter we are reviewing elements of story: plot, character, setting, conflict, and theme. Students will be learning about these items throughout the quarter utilizing their class novel and will be assessed at the end of the quarter.

I look forward to embarking on this Quarter 3 journey of discovery with you all!

Best,

Mr. Kemper

6th Grade English Language Arts Teacher

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Track & Field Head Coach

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