

Dear Team Vista Students, Parents and Guardians,

Here are all the requirements for Vista's new reading workshop that began for 8<sup>th</sup> graders on June 20 and begins on July 1 or earlier for 7<sup>th</sup> graders. We hope you continue to have a great summer of reading. We both have read many books that we can't wait to talk about during reading workshop.

## **Vista's Summer Reading Workshop**

*There is no more important homework than reading.* Research shows that the highest achieving students are those who devote leisure time to reading, even when the school day and year are only mid-length and homework isn't excessive. Recently, the largest-ever international study of reading found that the single most important predictor of academic success is the amount of time children spend reading books, more important even than economic or social status. And one of the few predictors of high achievement in math and science is the amount of time children devote to pleasure in reading. (Atwell, 2007)

So begins the letter that parents receive from the Center For Teaching and Learning, a school founded, directed, and taught by Nancie Atwell, a leading authority on literacy and what works in schools. This is the approach that Vista has adopted as well, and thus, this letter to you from us. During the past year, the teachers on Vista have been researching, reading, discussing, and modifying our approach to literacy during reading workshop and our content-area classes. In addition to this, we attended a literacy workshop offered by our district taught by Pam Mueller, a UNH literacy expert, after school from February through May. We also met with Pam during our teacher preparation periods to discuss literacy strategies that would improve student reading skills and levels. Pam even sat in on our reading workshop and content classes to give us feedback and expert advice. All of this has shown us that we need to change our approach to teaching reading. Mrs. Peterson and Mr. Viens attended a four-day internship at Atwell's school in October 2008. We were both impressed with their school-wide approach to literacy.

We began to shift our approach back in February 2007, which is when reading workshop became a graded class. Vista students had always been required to read at home and to keep a list of books completed and abandoned. However, in February we began to have students document their reading on reading logs with signatures to ensure that the reading was taking place. The reading workshop routine also changed. Students read for part of the time, but also participated in book talks, discussions and other reading activities to develop skills and comprehension. A key component to this was the implementation of reading journals, which allow us to individualize reading instruction. By the end of the year, students became familiar with the new reading routine.

The next shift in our approach to literacy is to extend reading into the summer. "Research tells us that children who do not read regularly during the summer months lose approximately three months of reading growth," (Routman, 2003). Therefore, we are requiring students to read

throughout the summer **30 minutes each week and reading at least 20 pages, seven days per week.** We are confident that this summer reading will prepare students for a successful academic year in 2011-2012.

In order for this literacy approach to work, staff and parents must work in unison. Therefore, we ask for your support in encouraging students to read. We have provided a list of local library hours as well as a list of websites of popular adolescent books. We hope these are helpful to you in finding books the students will enjoy. We also encourage you to establish a quiet reading zone in your home to foster focused reading. Consider with your child the best time, for reading to take place in your home. Working together, we can increase your student's literacy.

For information about all the requirements for reading workshop and to print copies of this letter, log on to our class blog at:

<http://ajviens.edublogs.org>

Click on the Spelling and Reading Workshop Forms link in the second column under Pages. The site has all the information including forms and this letter explaining our approach to literacy. Also listed below are the summer reading schedule, the books on literacy the staff on Vista have read, as well as the list of Web sites for book lists. Keep checking back to our blog to see other things of interest in regards to what Vista students are reading and doing in workshop classes. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation. We look forward to hearing about the adventures our students take this summer through their books.

Yours truly,

Lynn Peterson and Arthur Viens

### **Summer Reading Workshop Requirements**

1. All students must read an average of 30 minutes a day and at least 20 pages, seven days a week. Reading workshop begins on June 20 for 8<sup>th</sup> graders and for 7<sup>th</sup> graders as soon as this letter arrives at home and continues each week during the 2010-2011 school year.
2. Each student will maintain a **reading list** keeping track of all books started, finished, or abandoned.
3. Each week, send me a Gmail (ajviens@gmail.com) with the title of the book you are reading, the author, total pages of the book, and number of pages read for that week. Send a Gmail each week on the following days:

1. June 27	6. August 1
2. July 5	7. August 8
3. July 11	8. August 15
4. July 18	9. August 22
5. July 25	10. August 29

## References

- Allington, Richard L. (2006). *What Really Matters for Struggling Readers: Designing Research-Based Programs That Work*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Atwell, Nancie. (1998). *In the Middle*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Atwell, Nancie. (2007). *The Reading Zone*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Daniels, Harvey, and Nancy Steineke and Steve Zemelman. (2007). *Content-Area Writing: Every Teacher's Guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Daniels, Harvey and Steve Zemelman. (2004). *Subjects Matters: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gallagher, Kelly. (2003). *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Gallagher, Kelly. (2006). *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Graves, Donald H. (1991). *The Reading/Writing Teacher's Companion: Build A Literate Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Graves, Donald H. (1990). *The Reading/Writing Teacher's Companion: Discover Your Own Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hansen, Jane. (1987). *When Writers Read*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Harwayne, Shelley. (1992). *Lasting Impressions: Weaving Literature Into the Writing Workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Harwayne, Shelley. (2000). *Lifetime Guarantees: Toward Ambitious Literacy Teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Mueller, Pamela A. (2001). *Lifers: Learning from At-Risk Adolescent Readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Murray, Donald M. (1989). *Expecting the Unexpected: Teaching Myself—and Others—to Read and Write*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Rief, Linda. (1992). *Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Rief, Linda and Robert E. Probst and Kylene Beers Editors. (2007). *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise Into Practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routman, Regie. (1996). *Literacy At The Crossroads: Crucial Talk About Reading, Writing, and Other Teaching Dilemmas*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routman, Regie. (2003). *Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

### **Local Library Information**

**Effingham Public Library:** Tuesday: 2-8, Wed.: 12-6, Thur.: 2-8, Fri. and Sat.: 9-12, 539-1537

**New Durham Public Library:** Mon.-Thur.: 1-7, Fri.: 10-5, Sat.: 10-1, 859-2201

**Ossipee Public Library:** Hours: Mon. and Wed.: 3-8, Tues. and Thur.: 10-8:00, Fri.: 10-5, Sat.: 9-1, 539-6390

**Tuftonboro Free Library:** Tues.-Fri.: 10-5:30, Sat.: 9-12, Phone: 569-4256

**Wolfeboro Public Library:** Mon.-Thur.: 10-8, Fri.-Sat.: 10-5, Kingswood Regional Middle School or Kingswood Regional High School may receive a card at no charge, 569-2428

### **Web sites To Help You Find A Good Book**

[www.c-t-l.org](http://www.c-t-l.org), click on the kids recommended pages

<http://c-t-l.org/bookblog/>

[www.booksense.com](http://www.booksense.com)

<http://www.booklistonline.com/>

[http://bookshelvesofdoom.blogspot.com/bookshelves\\_of\\_doom/](http://bookshelvesofdoom.blogspot.com/bookshelves_of_doom/)

<http://hamlib.edublogs.org/>

<http://www.kdl.org/categories/subcategory/28>

<http://www.teenreads.com/features/ultimate-reading-list.asp>

<http://www.60secondrecap.com/>