

August, 2017

One of the primary goals in English Language Arts is to create readers who read variously. Independent choice reading is a critical component. It is no secret that children who are avid readers **outperform** those who are not. When readers are engaged in what they are reading, they invest more time in that venture. Researcher Stephen Krashen found that the single greatest factor in reading achievement was **reading volume**. His influential book, *The Power of Reading*, builds a strong case for wide reading.

With this in mind, the goal is for your son or daughter to read 40 books this year. In order to create a healthy reading life, your child will be expected to read at least **two hours outside of class weekly**. Each child's reading life differs. Therefore, we have worked hard to build an extensive classroom library. Your son or daughter will have the opportunity to select his or her own books to read independently throughout the school year.

To help your child reach the goal of reading **40 books this year**, we will provide a selection of books to borrow from the classroom library. The classroom library is available to any student who wants a book to read independently. (This is not the only place to get books. You can certainly help by bringing your child to the public library or a local bookstore.) Readers who have access to an e-reader may also choose this option. Research shows that availability of books is a major motivating factor in getting children to read. Students who are surrounded by books at school and at home read more. Students who read more will read better.

We want you to know that we are sensitive to having appropriate reading material in our classroom library. We understand that what is considered *appropriate* may vary from one parent to another. Please be aware that the selections in our classroom library, just like any public library, have a broad range for both interest and readability. As a parent, we ask you to remain aware of the books your child chooses to read throughout this school year and assist in gauging appropriateness.

Rest assured the books in our classroom library are not assigned. The books are chosen by your child, and there are many other choices if you are not satisfied with a book. Please help your child with choosing alternate books if you do not want him or her to read a chosen title.

Also, please help us by reminding your child to return any borrowed books. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any of us.

P.S. Our classroom benefits every year from castoffs. Please send books you no longer need to our library, especially ones you've loved, if you can bear to part with them. Better yet... come to class and share a book with us! We would love for you to share your passion for reading with our students!

Sincerely,

Crossroads Middle School Language Arts Staff

## Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?

Student "A"  
reads **20 minutes**  
each day

3600 minutes in  
a school year

**1,800,000 words**



*90<sup>th</sup> percentile*

Student "B"  
reads **5 minutes**  
each day

900 minutes in  
a school year

**282,000 words**



*50<sup>th</sup> percentile*

Student "C"  
reads **1 minute**  
each day

180 minutes in  
a school year

**8,000 words**



*10<sup>th</sup> percentile*

By the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade Student "A" will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student "B" will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

(Nagy & Herman, 1987)