



# MORRIS HILLS REGIONAL DISTRICT

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“The Past is our Lesson. The Present is our Gift. The Future is our Motivation.”

~unknown

May 2, 2016

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

The Morris Hills Regional District’s Summer Reading Program is founded on the belief that encouraging students to read year-round is a key element in the development of lifelong learners. As we enter the sixth year of the District-Wide Summer Reading Program, it is again my hope to replicate the past successes of the program and continue to promote reading across the curriculum and a communal experience. The District-Wide Summer Read is **mandatory** for all students attending Morris Hills High School and Morris Knolls High School.

In the spirit of the theme above, this year the District-Wide Summer Read will focus on a study of the literature of the Holocaust in an effort to create a cross-curricular experience that increases awareness of the valuable lessons that can be learned from studying history and sparks conversations about equality, human behavior, and responsible citizenship. Studying the Holocaust of World War II is one of the primary goals within the New Jersey Department of Education curriculum and, toward that end, we look to seize an opportunity to not only learn about its place in our history, but also listen to survivors recount their stories first-hand at our annual summer reading assembly in the fall for students and at our first summer reading night event open to the community. In the words of Anne Frank, “The sharpest weapon of all is a kind and gentle spirit. Nobody need wait a single moment before starting to change the world.” It is my hope that this experience encourages students to discuss their concerns involving peer pressure, bullying, and conformity. By studying the past to understand the present and inform the future, students can gain a greater awareness of the power they have to control their own behavior and the importance of making positive choices, ultimately understanding that one person can make a difference.

With the support of the Board of Education, administration, and faculty, students entering grades 9-12 in September 2016 are required to choose **one** title from the attached list to read. The titles represent a variety of genres, reading levels, and voices. While the titles chosen have been approved by our Board of Education and were selected for their appropriateness of interest, grade, and reading level, it is important to highlight the sensitive and emotional nature of the stories and testimonies within each text. The Summary Document provides teachers, students, and parents with guidance in selecting a text. Literature can be beneficial in assisting students in their study of the Holocaust. The oral testimony provided within each text can make history more understandable because of the feelings evoked and students can more easily relate to one person's story. Students must also complete the accompanying Annotation Assignment to be turned in at the first meeting of their English class in September. The assignment will evaluate the degree to which the student has interacted with the text and will be graded according to the Annotation Rubric included in the Annotation Assignment document.

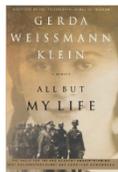
All documents pertaining to the District-Wide Read will be distributed through the English classes as well as through ASPEN prior to the last day of classes. It will also be posted on the district and school websites. **Please be advised that there is an additional summer reading title and assignment for students enrolled in Academy English I, Academy English II, English 9 Honors, English 10 Honors, English 11 Honors, AP Literature, AP Language, IB English I, and IB English II.** The titles and assignments for these courses can be found on the district website as well. Since students are responsible for obtaining a copy of the summer reading books, all sending schools, local libraries, and bookstores have received notification of all summer reading requirements so they may make appropriate preparations.

I appreciate your support as we continue this valuable learning experience. I am confident this will prove to be yet another inspirational experience for everyone.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Jennifer Toriello  
District Director of Instructional Service, Language Arts  
[jtoriello@mhrd.org](mailto:jtoriello@mhrd.org)

## DISTRICT-WIDE SUMMER READING OPTIONS

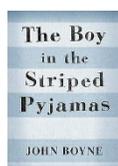


**All But My Life** (Gerda Weissman Klein) is the unforgettable story of Gerda Weissmann Klein's six-year ordeal as a victim of Nazi cruelty. Despite her horrifying experiences, Klein conveys great strength of spirit and faith in humanity. In the darkness of the camps, Gerda and her young friends manage to create a community of friendship and love. Gerda's beautifully written story gives an invaluable message to everyone. It introduces them to last century's terrible history of devastation and prejudice, yet offers them hope that the effects of hatred can be overcome. [http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/163363.All\\_But\\_My\\_Life](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/163363.All_But_My_Life)



**Between Shades of Gray** (Ruta Sepetys) - Lina is just like any other fifteen-year-old Lithuanian girl in 1941. She paints, she draws, and she gets crushes on boys. Until one night when Soviet officers barge into her home, tearing her family from the comfortable life they've known. Lina finds solace in her art, meticulously--and at great risk--documenting events by drawing, hoping these messages will make their way to her father's prison camp to let him know they are still alive. It is a long and harrowing journey, spanning years and covering 6,500 miles, but it is through incredible strength, love, and hope that Lina ultimately survives. *Between Shades of Gray* is a novel that will steal your breath and capture your heart.

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7824322-between-shades-of-gray>



**The Boy in the Striped Pajamas** (John Boyne) - Berlin, 1942: When Bruno returns home from school one day, he discovers that his belongings are being packed in crates. His father has received a promotion and the family must move to a new house far, far away, where there is no one to play with and nothing to do. A tall fence stretches as far as the eye can see and cuts him off from the strange people in the distance. But Bruno longs to be an explorer and decides that there must be more to this desolate new place than meets the eye. While exploring his new environment, he meets another boy whose life and circumstances are very different from his own, and their meeting results in a friendship that has devastating consequences.

[http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/39999.The\\_Boy\\_in\\_the\\_Striped\\_Pajamas](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/39999.The_Boy_in_the_Striped_Pajamas)



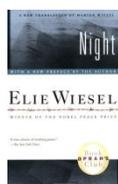
**The Journal of Helene Berr** (Helene Berr) - Not since *The Diary of Anne Frank* has there been such a book as this: The joyful but ultimately heartbreaking journal of a young Jewish woman in occupied Paris, now being published for the first time, 63 years after her death in a Nazi concentration camp. On April 7, 1942, H el ene Berr, a 21-year-old Jewish student of English literature at the Sorbonne, took up her pen and started to keep a journal, writing with verve and style about her everyday life in Paris — about her studies, her friends, her growing affection for the “boy with the grey eyes,” about the sun in the dewdrops, and about the effect of the growing restrictions imposed by France’s Nazi occupiers. Berr brought a keen literary sensibility to her writing, a talent that renders the story it relates all the more rich, all the more heartbreaking.

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4600787-the-journal-of-h-l-ne-berr>



**Maus I** (Art Spiegelman) The Pulitzer Prize-winning *Maus* tells the story of Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler’s Europe, and his son, a cartoonist coming to terms with his father’s story. Its form, the cartoon shocks us out of any lingering sense of familiarity and succeeds in “drawing us closer to the bleak heart of the Holocaust” (*The New York Times*). "*Maus* is a book that cannot be put down, truly, even to sleep.

When two of the mice speak of love, you are moved, when they suffer, you weep. Slowly through this little tale comprised of suffering, humor and life's daily trials, you are captivated by the language of an old Eastern European family, and drawn into the gentle and mesmerizing rhythm, and when you finish *Maus*, you are unhappy to have left that magical world."—Umberto Eco <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/maus-a-survivors-tale-art-spiegelman/1102168780>



**Night** (Elie Wiesel) - In Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel's memoir *Night*, a scholarly, pious teenager is wracked with guilt at having survived the horror of the Holocaust and the genocidal campaign that consumed his family. His memories of the nightmare world of the death camps present him with an intolerable question: how can the God he once so fervently believed in have allowed these monstrous events to occur? There are no easy answers in this harrowing book, which probes life's essential riddles with the lucid anguish only great literature achieves. It marks the crucial first step in Wiesel's lifelong project to bear witness for those who died.

[http://www.amazon.com/Night-Elie-Wiesel/dp/0374500010/ref=la\\_B000AP933K\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1455728454&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Night-Elie-Wiesel/dp/0374500010/ref=la_B000AP933K_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1455728454&sr=1-1)

**“Excellence in Education”**

[mhrd.org](http://mhrd.org)

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