

Dear incoming Gunston 9th Graders:

Hello there, Ms. Larrimore here! As your future English teacher, I would like to welcome you to the Gunston community. I am very excited for you to begin the next chapter of your lives at The Gunston School! As you'll find, there are many things to love about Gunston and Gunston's community. As an English teacher, I especially treasure the transformative power of language and the way that Gunston instills the value of reading within students. From events like In Celebration of Books, to programs such as The Gunston Writing Project, which includes the Junior Symposium and the Senior Paradigm Project, the way that Gunston celebrates the stories that we tell one another is special.

Gunston is also a place to discover new ideas and philosophies, especially through the stories you will read, analyze, and develop. As the acclaimed novelist and short story writer Richard Bausch has said, "To my mind, nothing is as important as good writing, because in literature, the walls between people and cultures are broken down, and the things that plague us most—suspicion and fear of the other, and the tendency to see whole groups of people as objects, as monoliths of one cultural stereotype or another—are defeated." Consistent with our mission of educating "ethically and environmentally minded scholars, citizens, and leaders for our globalized society," Gunston's English department encourages you to read many books this summer for your own personal pleasure.

However, you have one required book to read before the first day of school: *Lord of The Flies* by William Golding.

Now, you may ask (or learn to ask), why? In this masterpiece, a group of students not too different from yourselves learn firsthand the importance that communication plays in civilization, and all that can go wrong without it. The benefit that I've found in reading *Lord of The Flies* is that it reminds us of something that we often take for granted; just how important words are to our very existence – an idea that you all will become quite familiar with as you engage with your own experiences at Gunston.

This story is nothing if not valuable to young people entering a diverse world, figuring out what it is that they value and how they interact with the world around them; that is, the world around *you*. On top of that value, this summer reading book is digestible for all audiences and not something to fear! You all are joining us from a variety of different places and coming in having universally read *Lord of The Flies* is a great way to start off your freshman year with success. If there is one thing that you will have in common with your classmates, it will be this story!

Upon the start of the school year we will engage in active discussion, analysis, and connection with the book. You do not need to come in with anything other than having read the story, though I encourage you to consider the following questions as you read:

- How do you communicate with the people around you?
- What do young people have to offer the world?
- What do you value? How is it different from what the other people in your life value? Are there any connections between these things?

Once again, welcome to The Gunston School! If you have any questions about the assignment, please reach out to me at klarrimore@gunston.org. Have a great summer!

Yours,

Ms. Larrimore