All 7th grade students are required to read two novels: *The Giver* by Lois Lowry and *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak.

**The Giver** by Lois Lowry
*The Giver*, the 1994 Newbery Medal winner, has become one of the most influential novels of our time. The haunting story centers on twelve-year-old Jonas, who lives in a seemingly ideal, if colorless, world of conformity and contentment. Not until he is given his life assignment as the Receiver of Memory does he begin to understand the dark, complex secrets behind his fragile community. (amazon.com)

**The Book Thief** by Markus Zusak
Set in Germany during World War II, "... it's the kind of book that can be life-changing, because without ever denying the essential amorality and randomness of the natural order, *The Book Thief* offers us a believable, hard-won hope. That hope is embodied in Liesel, who grows into a good and generous person despite the suffering all around her, and finally becomes a human even Death can love. The hope we see in Liesel is unassailable, the kind you can hang on to in the midst of poverty and war and violence. Young readers need such alternatives to ideological rigidity, and such explorations of how stories matter. And so, come to think of it, do adults." (New York Times book review)

The first few weeks of class will be devoted to the study of the summer reading books. While you are not required to complete a writing assignment on the reading over the summer, you are expected to be an active and engaged reader of these books. That means you should take notes (highlighting or underlining important parts, writing notes in the margins) as you read to help you remember important parts. We will begin assessments relating to these books on the second day of school.

Some things to take notes on as you read:

- Study the setting of each book and think about the impact it has on the plot and characterization
- Describe the characters, both primary and secondary
- Note the major conflicts in each book and how the conflicts are resolved
- Identify the climax and the events that led to this event
- Consider family and community relationships and connections within each story

Again, you are expected to be an active and engaged reader of the books. While you are not required to complete a writing assignment on the reading over the summer, you are responsible for the reading and creating meaning from it. Testing on the books will begin the second day of school. Bring copies of the books with you when you report to school. (If this proves to be problematic for you and your family, see your teacher at the beginning of school.)