

# Clapham's Classroom Library

Dear Parents/Guardians of my English 8 Students:

Reading is a central focus in my classroom, and as we begin a new year, I would like to share some thoughts about reading with you. Reading is a skill. The only way to get better at reading is to read—this holds true for excellent readers as well as reluctant readers. With this in mind, my goal is for our students to significantly increase their time spent reading and grow as readers. In order for this all to occur, our students must be engaged in reading. I would like to see each student reading every day. I will do my best to motivate our students to read academically as well as for fun. However, before I turn students loose on the bookshelves in my classroom, I'd like to provide you with some important information and make a request.

This letter is a bit lengthy, but the assumptions it rests upon are too important to be treated in a superficial manner. Please take the time to read this and know what you're signing before you do. To help our students develop powerful reading skills and an ongoing interest in reading, I dedicate a portion of class to independent reading. Additionally, former students and I have worked hard to develop our classroom library (and continue to do so). This library is available to any student who wants to choose a book to be read recreationally. They can also use these books to complete *outside reading projects* throughout the school year. Research shows that book choice is a major motivating factor in getting teens to read. Students who are surrounded by books at school and at home read more. Students who read more, read better. I have found having my own classroom library has dramatically increased the amount of reading my students do. Please be aware that the selections in my classroom library, just like any public library, range from elementary to middle school-level / young adult-level reading material.

Some parents do not mind their student reading young adult novels, but other parents may object. Because I deeply respect you as parents and the values your family has, I want you to know I am sensitive to having appropriate material in my library. However, what is considered "appropriate" may vary from one parent to another. As much as I try to have a wide knowledge of books students are reading, it is impossible for me to read every book. As your partner in education, I ask you to please have a conversation with your student about which book genres and topics are deemed appropriate in your family.

Please also remain aware throughout the year of the books your student has chosen to read and assist in gauging appropriateness. If you discover your student has chosen a book you are not comfortable with, please know they can immediately return that book and choose a different one. Rest assured the books in my classroom library are never assigned. Some students use my library a lot;

others find books elsewhere. Again, my only intention is to grow our students as readers and cultivate life-long reading habits.

Finally, as with any other lending library, there is no cost for students to borrow and read books from my library. However, students are responsible for keeping track of and returning borrowed books. If the book is lost or returned damaged, the student will be responsible for either replacing the book or paying for the book. Any student who checks books out of my library is asked to have a parent or guardian sign below, indicating this classroom library letter has been read and understood. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [clapham.susana@cusd80.com](mailto:clapham.susana@cusd80.com).

Let's get reading!

Mrs. Clapham