

Rising 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Students  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts | 2025 Summer Work  
Dr. Heggs

Dear Rising Sixth-Grade Students,

Welcome to Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School! As you prepare to embark upon your middle school career, I would like to remind you of something incredibly powerful—something that can unlock doors, spark imagination, and shape your future: reading.

Reading is more than just an assignment to complete for school or even a way to pass time. It is a critical skill that helps you grow in every area of your life. Through books, you can travel to different parts of the world, explore new ideas, and see life from other people’s perspectives—all without ever leaving your seat. Reading improves your vocabulary, strengthens your writing, and teaches you how to think critically and creatively.

Each time you read, you are building knowledge and preparing yourself for the future. Whether you are interested in mathematics, science, history, the arts, or technology, reading will help you deepen your understanding and fuel your passion. Even fiction plays an important role in helping you develop empathy (compassion) and imagination.

With this being said, please carefully read the expectations and requirements for your English Language Arts (ELA) summer work (see page two-four). I highly encourage you to complete the work a little bit at a time over the course of the summer. Set a goal to have some work completed by the end of each summer month (May, June, and July). **Along with your physical copy of the required summer reading, please be sure to bring your completed and printed assignment (see page two-four) to class on the first day of school, Tuesday, August 5, 2025. The assignment will count as a minor grade. In addition, a novel test will be administered during the second week of school. The tentative date for this assessment will be Thursday, August 14, 2025.**

I look forward to seeing each of you in August. Until then, have a great summer filled with amazing adventures and reading!

Best Regards,

Dr. Jalen N. Heggs

6th Grade English Language Arts

John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School

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**Part One:** Read the following novel, **Ninth Ward**, by Jewell Parker Rhodes.

<https://www.amazon.com/Ninth-Ward-Jewell-Parker-Rhodes/dp/0316043087>

**Part Two:** Reading Discussion Responses and Review

- Expectations and Requirements:
  1. Create a heading that includes your first and last name, the teacher's name (Dr. Heggs), the class name (English Language Arts 6), the date (August 5, 2025), and the assignment title at the top of your assignment.
  2. For **reading discussion questions #1-4**, each response should be **six to eight (6-8) complete sentences in length (please do not exceed eight (8) sentences per response)**.
  3. For **reading discussion question #5**, your response should be a **minimum of six (6) sentences**, which will provide an opportunity for you to elaborate and expound in great detail.
  4. Each response **MUST** be typed (**single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font**).
  5. Number each response to match that of the question numbers listed below.
  6. The assignment will be due on the first day of school, **Tuesday, August 5, 2025**.
- Respond to the following reading discussion questions on the novel, **Ninth Ward**:
  1. How does living with Mama Ya-Ya in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans help shape who Lanesha is and how she sees the world? What can you tell about how their relationship helps Lanesha grow as a person in the first ten (10) pages of the book?
  2. What does Lanesha's choices during the storm tell you about her personality? Give examples from the novel to explain your thinking.
  3. In **Ninth Ward**, what is the significance of the moon, and how does it relate to Lanesha's journey?
  4. What is an ordinary day like in the Ninth Ward? How does it compare to an ordinary day in your own neighborhood? Give examples from the book and your own experiences to explain your thinking.
  5. Would you recommend this book? Explain your feelings about the book (what you liked/did not like/favorite part/what you might change in the story). Make sure you support your comments with details from the text!

**Part Three:** Please expect a novel test on **Ninth Ward**, by Jewell Parker Rhodes, during the second week of school. **The tentative date for this assessment will be Thursday, August 14, 2025.**

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**EXEMPLAR**

**\*Note: This exemplar does NOT contain responses to the novel, Ninth Ward. \***

[Your First and Last Name]

Dr. Heggs

English Language Arts 6

August 5, 2025

**Seedfolks: Reading Discussion Responses and Review**

1. In the novel Seedfolks, the characters get involved with the garden for many different reasons. Kim starts the garden by planting lima beans to feel close to her father, who passed away before she was born. Ana gets curious about what Kim is doing and starts to care about the garden, too. Gonzalo sees how the garden helps his uncle feel proud and useful again. For Leona, the garden is a way to clean up the neighborhood and make it a better place. Sae Young wants to feel safe and connected to others after a scary experience, and the garden helps her feel like part of a community. Many characters join because they want to grow their own food or bring beauty to their neighborhood. Overall, the garden brings people together and helps them feel hopeful and connected.
2. In Seedfolks, the characters face many different challenges in their lives and in the garden. Kim feels lonely because she never knew her father. Leona struggles with the city not caring about the trash in her neighborhood. Sae Young is scared to be around people after she was robbed at her store. Wendell deals with sadness after losing his family and feels like he cannot fix anything. The garden itself also has problems, like hard soil, cold weather, and people not always getting along. But the characters work through these problems and help each other. They learn to be strong and hopeful by working together in the garden. The challenges they face help them grow, just like the plants they take care of.
3. The garden brings people from different backgrounds together and helps them become a community. At first, the lot was full of trash, and nobody talked to each other. As more people joined the garden, they began to help one another and share stories. The garden made the neighborhood look better and feel safer. People started to care about their space and each other. It gave them hope and a place to grow not just plants, but also friendships. Everyone who worked in the garden felt like they were part of something special. The garden helped turn strangers into neighbors.
4. In Seedfolks, the characters did not always have to dig or plant to get something good from the garden. Some people, like Ana, never planted anything, but watching the garden helped her feel more hopeful and connected. Others, like Wendell, started by just helping a little but found peace and purpose by being near the garden. Even people walking by felt inspired by how the empty lot turned into something beautiful. The garden gave people a reason to talk to each other and work together, even if they did not all grow plants. It made the whole neighborhood feel more alive and friendly. So, just being part of the community and caring about the garden helped people. The garden brought change to everyone, not just the ones who planted seeds.
5. I would recommend Seedfolks to other students because it is a short but powerful book with an important message. I liked how each chapter was told by a different character, so we got to see many points of view. It was interesting to learn about people from different cultures

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and how they each had a reason for joining the garden. My favorite part was seeing how the garden brought everyone together and made the neighborhood a better place. At first, the characters felt alone, but by the end, they were like a family. One thing I might change is adding more chapters at the end to show how the garden grew in the future. I think other kids would enjoy this book because it is easy to read but has deep lessons about kindness, hope, and working together. It shows how small actions, like planting a seed, can lead to big changes.