



July 2011

Dear Grade 8 Student,

The purpose of this letter is two-fold. First, we—Mrs. Bell and Mrs. Smith—would like to introduce ourselves and tell you how excited we are to be your English teachers come September. Secondly, we want to remind you that you have a required summer reading assignment, and if you haven't already done so, please read the first book in the trilogy, *Spud* by John Van De Ruit and *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton.

Both *Spud* and *The Outsiders* are stories about teenagers, who are trying to fit into their worlds while trying to better understand themselves and the people around them. Their worlds are very different: *Spud* is set in the 1990s at a boarding school in South Africa; *The Outsiders* is set in the 1960s in America and revolves around the lives of kids in gangs. Both stories explore the basic human need for belonging and we see just how far people are willing to go in order to fit in.

Of course, you are not limited to reading only these novels this summer, and we look forward to hearing about your favourite books. In fact, that will likely be our very first question to you: "What are your favourite books?" So be prepared with an impressive response!

Until then, we hope you have a fabulous summer, and HAPPY READING!

Mrs. Bell and Mrs. Smith

**"Reading is to the mind, what exercise is to the body."**

-Sir Francis Bacon