Summer 2026

Dear 8th Graders,

We do hope this letter finds you with you shoes kicked off, enjoying the sunshine. Summer is such a refreshing time — a time full of adventure. Here are a few things you should do this summer:

1) Find a new insect.
2) Taste something new.
3) Try sleeping with one sock on and one sock off.
4) Read a book aloud to a child**,** Miss Hartke suggests *There's a Wocket in my Pocket* by Dr. Seuss.
5) Learn a new three syllable word.
6) Listen to silence, if you can find it.
7) Play a game that is just a bit too hard for you.

Then, in your spare moments, you get to **read** *The Lord of the Rings,* specifically *The Two Towers.* If you have forgotten all the things from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, we suggest you re-read that as well. We expect you to be able to engaged with the events and characters from both books in class.

Please do not rush through *The Two Towers*. Let some of these characters become your friends, and learn to beware of others.

- You should have a pencil in your hand marking worthy passages to share in class.
- You should select something to **track** through the novel. For example, you might track a pattern in the use of color or every time the word hope appears or mark every time wise counsel is given.
- Miss Hartke would also appreciate a compelling case for which two towers are *the* two towers.

Once you have wandered through this novel, you need to pick a valuable scene to **illustrate**. This is not an art project as much as a wise selection and narrative detail project. Choose carefully. You will present your illustration to the class with a defense of your choices in the middle of the first week.

To refresh and prepare yourself well reading the entire Chronicles of Narnia would be a blessing, If we had to pick one, we would suggest: *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. The Rule of Saint Benedict* or *Macbeth,* I commend to pre-read on your own. Do you want a good story? Then try *The White Company* by Sir. Arthur Conan Doyle. But any of his Sherlock Holmes collections are also delightful. Do you want a challenge? Try *The Black Arrow* by Robert Louis Stevenson. It is also a fitting time to re-read old favorites: *The Door in the Wall, The Phantom Tollbooth,* or *Anne of Green Gables.*

Rest well! Refresh yourself! And we will see you in the future where we it will be my honor to welcome you to Traditio guiding you through Middle Earth and the Middle Ages.

Grace and Peace,
Mr. Gold & Miss Hartke