Letter to Family (English)

Copy this and personalize as needed to send home to families on the first day of the unit.

Dear Families:

Today, we are beginning a new unit in our ELA class. This unit, *Fragments of Truth,* focuses on building knowledge about trust, justice, and the structure of our American justice system. The unit has three essential questions that drive inquiry, promote deep understanding, and encourage students to make connections across different texts, tasks, and units. These questions spark curiosity and critical thinking as we build our reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Our three essential questions for this unit are:

What factors contribute to justice?
How does a jury strengthen trust in the justice system?
Why is the presumption of innocence essential to a fair trial?

In this unit, students will read, write, speak, listen, and research as they build answers to these essential questions. Complex texts will challenge students as they read for various purposes and in a variety of formats. We will focus on informative writing in this unit, building our literacy skills by grounding our writing in evidence from the texts we read.

In this unit, independent reading will also help students consider how juries and the concept of innocent until proven guilty influence our understanding of truth and justice, as well as connect with the texts we work on in class. Students will choose a novel from a list of text options that can be borrowed from the school or public library, if it is not available in our classroom library.

You can support your eighth grader's independent reading by encouraging them to set aside a regular time for reading each day, and showing interest in the book they choose. Discussing the theme, characters, and choices they make, as well as the connections to real life, can help them stay engaged and deepen their understanding.

Looking forward to learning with your student,

_____
(Space for teacher name)