

## SUMMER 2017 – MEIGS EIGHTH-GRADE SUMMER READING

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For eighth-grade summer reading, all rising eighth graders will select TWO summer reading texts. One summer reading text will be for Literacy, and one summer reading text will be for Science and Social Studies. Both Literacy and Science/Social Studies provide three options from which students may select their summer reading book.

Along with each summer reading book, students are to record notes. The notes may be hand written or typed, but need to be the equivalent to one-page of 8 ½" x 10" notebook paper. Notes will be assessed at the beginning of the school year.

Students will be tested on the contents of each book they read – characters, conflicts, setting, plot, theme, etc. – within the first two weeks of the school year. These will be closed-book tests. Students should come back to school in August prepared with any questions they have about their summer reading books. Individual teachers may provide additional assignments related to summer reading after the start of the school year.

Note to parents: The webpage [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org) is an excellent source for parents to use in order to be familiarized with the texts students are reading. The webpage provides “WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW” including the educational value, positive messages, positive role models, violence usage, sex usage, language usage, consumerism usage, and drinking, drugs, and smoking usage for a given novel. We strongly encourage your usage of this website to assist in your child’s summer reading text selections!

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*LITERACY SUMMER READING: Select ONE from the three options provided.*

*Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld (Science Fiction)

Tally has grown up in a postapocalyptic world where, at age 16, everyone is given an operation that makes their faces and bodies perfect. Before the operation they are known as “uglies” and after as “pretties.” After the operation they live in New Pretty Town, enjoying a life of constant partying and pleasure. Tally can't wait. Shortly before her 16th birthday, she befriends Shay, who tells her about the Smoke, a secret community of those who refuse the operation. When Shay runs away to join the Smoke, Tally is given a choice by the Specials, the secret police: Help them find the Smoke and betray her friend, or remain an ugly forever.

Message: Raises issues about whether making everyone “pretty” will really “even the playing field” to lessen the discrimination and all that comes with it – jealousy, racism, and war – or whether altering someone’s perception and thinking is what really does it. The way people become “pretty” also sends a strong message about the high price of perfection. The book explores the environmental impact of our world now and how important individual freedoms are and what people are willing to do for them.

*Finding Audrey* by Sophie Kinsella (Fiction)

\*\*This novel contains mature language. Please refer to the [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org) webpage to view specifics.

Audrey, a 14-year-old protagonist suffering from anxiety and depression, is on a break from school, trying to recover from a horrible but unspecified bullying incident at school that left her susceptible to panic attacks and unable to venture outside her house or make eye contact. Her therapist encourages her to make a documentary, and she records her home life, including often very funny interactions between her well-meaning but clueless parents and her older brother, whom they’ve banned from playing video games (but he finds ways to play them anyway). Plus, the film gives her an excuse to talk to cute, caring Linus, a friend of her brother who believes Audrey can get better.

Message: There is a definite message about the damage bullying can do but also one about how it’s possible to recover from traumatic events. Audrey learns some powerful coping mechanisms, including how to stop feeling that there are so many “have-to’s” in life.

## *Dumplin'* by Julie Murphy (Fiction)

\*\*This novel contains mature language. Please refer to the [www.commonensemedia.org](http://www.commonensemedia.org) webpage to view specifics.

Willowdean Dickson, a high school junior, has always been fat and happy. But when she starts falling for her cute coworker and he starts falling for her, she suddenly starts to question everything she ever thought about herself and her relationship to her body. Just as she's trying to get her self-confidence back, she has a huge fight with her best friend about entering the local beauty pageant. As if that weren't enough, Willowdean's frosty relationship with her beauty-queen mother (who gave her the nickname DUMPLIN') takes a nosedive when she starts to invade her mother's pageant territory. But Willowdean feels she has just as much of a right to participate as anyone, even if she knows she won't win. Can she survive the pageant, get her best friend back, and get the guy? And will she ever be comfortable in her own skin again?

Message: You can be beautiful and fat at the same time. Stop chasing perfection. Go after the things you want, don't wait for them to happen. Outsiders have to change society's view of them by being present in society. You don't have to earn the right to enjoy life in public places by being conventionally attractive. Good friendships are durable, but don't let pride or stubbornness get in the way.

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## *Science/Social Studies: Select ONE from the three options provided.*

### *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson

The genre is historical fiction; the setting, Philadelphia in 1793. The main character does her best to survive a yellow fever epidemic that kills 10 percent of her city's population. It was one of the worst epidemics in United States history.

### *October Sky* by Homer Hickham

This is the true story of a teenage boy growing up in a coal town in West Virginia during the 1950s. His destiny was to "end up in the mines." However, with encouragement from his teacher, he and three of his buddies began making rockets which they flew from a patch of barren land outside of town.

### *Salt* by Helen Frost

The setting for the story is in and around Fort Wayne in the Indiana Territory, just before the start of the Battle of 1812. Pioneers have settled into the area, but there is much talk of a great battle brewing, pitting the settlers against the British. Tenuous friendships have been forged between some Indian tribes and some settlers, but these ties are threatened with impending conflict.