

Weston Middle School

Summer Reading List Grade 8

Grade Eight

2008-2009

Students entering Grade 8 in September 2008

Dear Eighth Grade Reader,

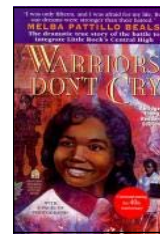
Next September you will be returning to the Weston Middle School as an eighth grader. Congratulations!

Over the summer, we want you to prepare for eighth grade by reading one required book and one other book of your own choosing from this list. While we want you to enjoy the pleasure of personal reading, we highly recommend some books by selected authors. Your English teacher will expect you to be familiar with Beals' book when you return to school in the fall and will assign writing based on that expectation.

Also, please choose one other title from the suggestions below. You will notice the range of styles and content among the books. These selections offer a rich world of reading experiences, and we encourage you to choose a book that is personally appropriate and appeals to you. Note that reading a variety of authors will strengthen your reading skills and broaden your understanding of literary styles.

Beals, Melba Pattillo – *Warriors Don't Cry*

Beals was one of nine black teen-agers who, in 1957, integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the face of opposition from Gov. Orval Faubus and the state National Guard. President Dwight D. Eisenhower eventually sent troops to protect the students' right to attend school. This is the author's incredible memoir of those events, incorporating excerpts from a journal she kept as a 16-year-old.



Non-Fiction

Angelou, Maya – *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

In this autobiography, African-American poet Maya Angelou recounts a youth filled with disappointment, frustration, tragedy, and finally hard-won independence.

Armstrong, Lance – *It's Not About the Bike and Every Second Counts*

Lance Armstrong's autobiography with Sally Jenkins is an inspirational story. In this book, Lance Armstrong is a hero for anyone to look up to, because not only is he an amazing world renowned cyclist, but he is also a normal person, who was forced to overcome many hardships to prove his heroism.



Barakat, Ibtisam - *Tasting the Sky; A Palestinian Childhood*

A memoir about a girl growing up and trying to survive in war-torn Palestine, and how learning to read changes her life.

Lekuton, Joseph Lemasolai - *Facing the Lion; Growing Up Maasai on the African Savanna*

Young Joseph, the only child in his family to go to school, finds himself torn between the traditions of his nomadic tribe and the western way of life.

Mah, Adeline Yen– *Chinese Cinderella*

Adeline Yen Mah tells the story of her painful childhood and her ultimate triumph and courage in the face of despair. Adeline's affluent, powerful family considers her bad luck after her mother dies giving birth to her. Life does not get any easier when her father remarries. She and

her siblings are subjected to the disdain of her stepmother, while her step brother and stepsister are spoiled. Despite her success at academics, she yearns for a loving and understanding family.

Philbrick, Nathaniel – *In the Heart of the Sea: the Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex*

Melville's novel *Moby Dick* was based on an actual event: the 1821 sinking of the Nantucket whaleship *Essex* by an enormous sperm whale. Nathaniel Philbrick's book details the ill-fated journey of the *Essex*, illuminating a terrifying drama not included in *Moby Dick* -- the fate of the survivors after their ship was sunk. Not for the faint of heart--the account can get quite gory!

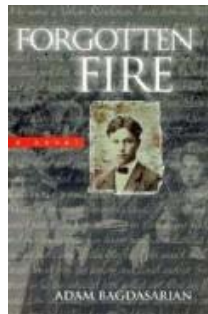
Realistic Fiction

Anderson, Laurie Halse – *Speak*

Melinda is a friendless outcast at Merryweather High. She busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, and now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. It is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face the terrible event that happened at the party. This time she refuses to be silent. *Please note: this book contains mature language and subject matter.*

Bagdasarian, Adam – *Forgotten Fire*

Based on the experiences of the author's great uncle during the Armenian Holocaust, it is the story of one boy's search for strength and courage. This novel recounts a tragic and often overlooked human catastrophe, as seen through the eyes of a young person.



Korman, Gordon – *Son of the Mob*

Vince Luca, 17, has always been concerned, embarrassed, and fearful about his crime-family background, though he has sworn never to become involved or let it keep him from upstanding behavior. During his senior year, all he wants is romance, friendship and to get through school just like any normal guy, but things don't go as planned. His new girlfriend turns out to be the daughter of the FBI agent who is trying to put Vince's father away for good.

Lupica, Mike – *Travel Team*

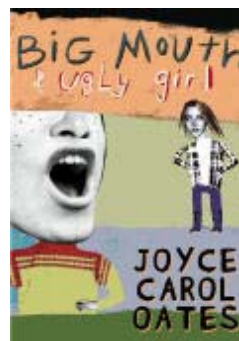
Twelve-year-old Danny Walker, a talented baseball player, fails to make the cut for his seventh grade all-star travel team—the same suburban Middletown team that Danny's father has led to the championship. Danny's father, still reeling from his own troubles, knows his son is not the only kid who was cut for the wrong reasons. Together, this washed-up former player and a bunch of never-say-die kids prove that heart is what really counts.

Na, An – *A Step From Heaven*

A young girl describes her family's bittersweet experience in the United States after their emigration from Korea. Told through the eyes of Young Ju, who is a preschooler when the book begins and a young woman heading off to college by the time it ends, *A Step from Heaven* is a tale about cultural differences, family dynamics, and the struggle to survive.

Oates, Joyce Carol – *Big Mouth and Ugly Girl*

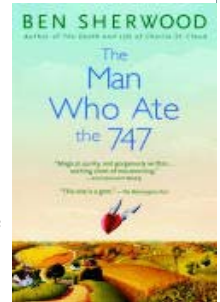
Loner Ursula Riggs has built an impenetrable persona for herself—warrior woman, alias Ugly Girl. Classmate Matt Donaghy has a big mouth, solely intended for entertaining his friends—until it gets him falsely accused of wanting to blow up his high school. When Ursula drags herself out of her shell to defend Matt, a friendship develops.



Sherwood, Ben – *The Man Who Ate the 747*

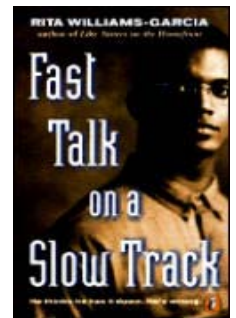
J.J. Smith, Keeper of the Records for the Book of Records, has traveled the world to witness and confirm extraordinary and uncanny events.

However, nothing could prepare him for his most profound discovery of all in a tiny town in America's heartland—a local farmer is consuming a Boeing 747, bite by bite, to prove his uncontested love to the woman of his dreams! This is a story about true love.



Williams-Garcia, Rita – *Fast Talk on a Slow Track*

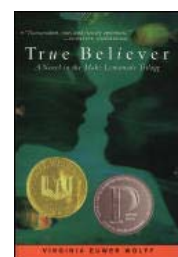
This is a story about black teenager Denzel Watson, who has sailed through school, receiving straight A's, lavish praise and the honor of being high school valedictorian. Preparing to enter Princeton in the fall, Denzel attends the university's summer session for minority students—and experiences failure for the first time.



Wolff, Virginia – *True Believer*

This is the sequel to the book *Make Lemonade*.

Now, LaVaughn, a 15-year-old teen who's determined to break free from her constricting inner city neighborhood, is starting tenth grade. She deals with the distractions of first love, drifting apart from her lifelong friends, and realizing her intense desire to go to college.

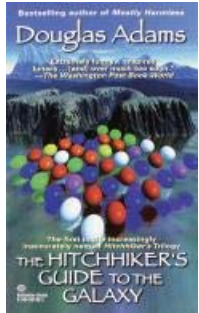


Science Fiction / Fantasy

Adams, Douglas – *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* or the other books in this series

Arthur Dent, a mild-mannered, out-to-lunch earthling, is plucked from his planet by his friend Ford Prefect just seconds before it is demolished to make way for a hyper-space bypass.

Ford, posing as an out-of-work actor, is a researcher for the revised edition of "*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*." Together the twosome begin their intergalactic journey through time and space.



Chabon, Michael – *Summerland*

Ethan Feld, the worst ball player in the history of the game, is recruited by a hundred-year-old scout called Ringfinger Brown, himself a Negro League legend. Accompanied by his determined friend, Jennifer T. Rideout, and guided by a friendly werefox, Ethan struggles to defeat giants, bat-winged goblins, and one of the toughest ball clubs in the realms of magic, to save all the Summerlands, and ultimately the world.



Herbert, Frank – *Dune*

Set on the desert planet Arakis, this is the story of the boy Paul Atreides, who becomes the mysterious man known as Muad'Dib. He avenges the traitorous plot against his noble family and brings to fruition peace throughout the universe. A blend of adventure, mysticism and politics.



King, Steven – *The Green Mile*

Set in the 1930's at the Cold Mountain Penitentiary's death-row facility, *The Green Mile* is the tragic story of John Coffey, a giant, gentle inmate wrongly condemned to death for the murder of twin nine-year-old girls. It is a story narrated years later by Paul Edgecomb, the ward superintendent, who discovers Coffey's secret: his supernatural ability.

Please note: this book contains mature language and subject matter.

Farmer, Nancy – *The House of the Scorpion*

In this sci-fi thriller, a young clone struggles for acceptance in his tumultuous, sheltered world. Matt's last name is Alacran, which means that he belongs to a powerful family that controls the drug farms between the US and the former Mexico. But Matt is different; he's a clone in a world filled with dangers for his kind. His only protection from the brutal surroundings are El Patron, the elderly patriarch and drug lord kingpin from whom he was made, his caretaker Celia, and a bodyguard who has been assigned to him. Things fall apart when Matt learns the real reason for his creation and makes a harrowing escape to a promising, yet frighteningly insecure, world.

